

**BIKES<sub>ON</sub>  
TOUR**

22 PAGES OF EXPERT  
ADVICE, READER TRIPS  
AND GREAT ROUTES

## SPOT FAKE KIT

How to make sure you don't end up  
buying imitation bike gear

## BLOWING IN THE WIND

Why air-cooleds  
will be gone by 2020



# MOTORCYCLE

FOR THE FUN OF RIDING

SPORT & LEISURE

# 6 OF THE BEST: 2015

## NEW BIKES RIDDEN

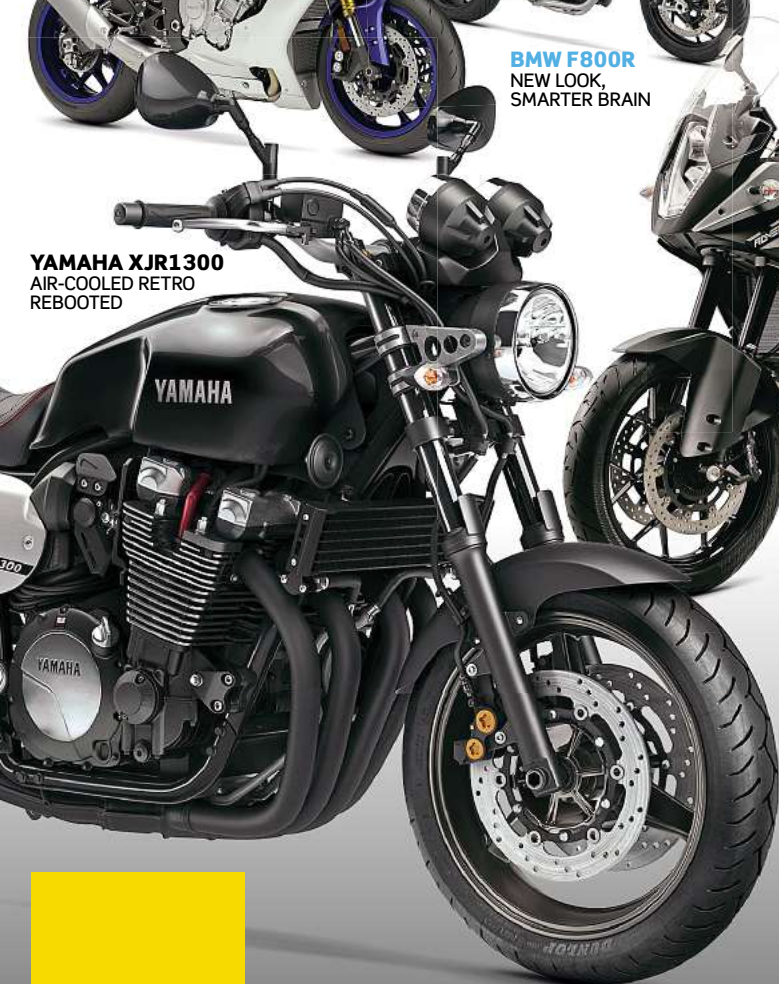
**YAMAHA R1**  
IF ROSSI MADE  
SPORTSBIKES...



**KAWASAKI  
VULCAN**  
MID-CAPACITY  
CRUISING

**BMW F800R**  
NEW LOOK,  
SMARTER BRAIN

**YAMAHA XJR1300**  
AIR-COOLED RETRO  
REBOOTED



**KTM 1050  
ADVENTURE**  
THE TOURER  
YOU NEED...

**KTM  
1290  
SUPER  
ADVENTURE**  
THE TOURER YOU REALLY WANT...



APRIL 655

**PLUS:**

BONNEVILLE BUYER'S GUIDE ♦ KAWASAKI H2 REVISITED ♦ NORWAY BY BIKE





Image taken on closed road.

## The New 2015 Ducati Multistrada 1200 with affordable\* monthly repayments

### Representative Example:

Based on Multistrada 1200 with a contracted annual mileage of 6,000.

35 Monthly Repayments	£159.00	Cash Price	£13,130.00
Initial Repayment	£175.00	Deposit	£3,283.50
Final Repayment	£6,163.00	Total Amount of Credit	£9,846.50
Total Amount Payable	£15,186.50	Credit Facility Fees <sup>§</sup>	£230.00
Interest Rate (Fixed)	7.27%	Purchase Fee <sup>§§</sup>	£10.00
Representative APR	8.6% APR	Duration of Agreement	37 Months

<sup>§</sup> Included in Monthly Repayments. <sup>§§</sup> Included in Final Repayment.

\*Your regular monthly repayments are low because it is the nature of a PCP product that a significant proportion of the total amount payable is payable at the end of the contract by one large final repayment. Finance is subject to status and is only available to UK applicants aged 18 or over. TriOptions PCP is only available through Ducati Finance which is a trading style of Black Horse Ltd, St. William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff CF10 5BH. Figures are correct as of 13th January 2015. Finance offer ends 30th April 2015.



The flexible, affordable way to ride a new Ducati today.



# It's not a very funny joke...

**Tony Carter**



**O**kay, so here's where I can tell you something that happened in the last month that's a bit lairy (and not necessarily something I would have put in the actual report on this model that you can read from page 16).

Two things I should tell you about this story before we get into it; I'm going to tell you the truth about what happened, which will make me seem pretty dumb and I'm going to be talking about another tester from another publication (Shock! Horror!).

Okay, so it was while we were riding the KTM 1050. This is, essentially, a pared down, less powerful, version of the 1190 that's easier to get on with and all that jazz. It works really well and we were having a jolly hockeysticks time of it romping around Gran Canaria at pace.

The KTM factory man was leading our group of six. Second in the line was my old mate Adam 'Chad' Child from MCN and I was in behind Chadski as the number three. The pace was fine (a bit brisk but not track-mad on the mountain roads) and starting to pick up.

Mr KTM and Chadster were cutting fine lines through the switchback corners, just a few feet in front of me which meant that I had a great view of the KTM in full flight. We dropped the other riders off a bit as the pace went up.

And then it happened.

Actually, before I get to the next bit, I should explain that I normally wear a very dark visor on my Shark lid for this type of job. Not least of all because with foreign launches you usually get good sunshine and dry roads (kind of the point) and also because if I'm dark-visored up then you lot don't have to look at my ugly mug in riding shots.

So, back to the story.

But it really did happen. A cautionary tale about not riding with a track black visor in shadows. Or maybe it's about not being an idiot.

Katoom chap and Chadmongo and I were climbing a pretty steep bit of mountain, scraping away. We came in to a third gear left that tightened up into what looked like a second gear right, but was completely covered in very dark shadow cast by the rock face.

So I set the bike up, down a gear and laid it into the right. BANG! The front wheel was maybe two feet in the air, my right foot thrown off the footrest and the bars snapped out of my hands. Three or four feet away was a perfunctory bit of Armco with a 2000m drop on the other side (I might be exaggerating that a bit here, but it was a long way down) and I was now in a 50mph, one footed wheelie heading right for it.

I'd like to say it was rider input that saved me, but it wasn't. The whole thing happened and came back underneath me as quick as a flash and I could snick down a gear and chase after the Chadazephor.

Turns out what had happened was, that I'd hit a small boulder that had dropped off the cliff and right on to my line. The black track visor and heavy shadow meant I couldn't see it.

Flippin' idiot.

Mind you, shows how well set up that KTM is. It's a lot boulder than a GS, that's for sure.

Ha!

Have a safe ride.

**Tony Carter**  
Editor

## Tony Carter

Tony has been riding for nearly 30 years, in most countries and on most types of bikes. A journalist for nearly 20 years, MSL's editor has written for a host of newspapers including *The Sun*, *The Mirror* and *The Observer*. Formerly head of news at *Motor Cycle News*, he has written for dozens of motorcycle magazines around the world.

## MSL: Meet the Team



### Bruce Wilson

MSL's deputy editor started riding aged 10. He's 28 now. Bruce has written for *Motorcycle Racer*, *MCM*, *Classic Motorcycle Mechanics* and others, before joining MSL three years ago. He has since tested almost every new bike launched.



### Roland Brown

Has ridden for 37 years and been a bike journalist for more than 30. At *Bike* he ended up as deputy editor before going freelance. An author of 11 books, as a racer he was Bemsee 1300 champion 1984 and raced UK F1, Superstock and Superbike, plus World F1 races.



### Alan Cathcart

Alan Cathcart has been writing about bikes for over 30 years, and riding them for even longer. He's regularly given the keys to factory prototypes and being on first name terms with the bosses of bike companies around the world allows him to bag many scoops.



### Chris Moss

Mossy has raced the Isle of Man TT, dispatched in London and ridden everything from CX500s to full-blown GP prototypes. A former chief motorcycle tester for *Motor Cycle News*, the 53-year-old admits he's still loving two-wheeled life, and still learning.



### Malc Wheeler

Malc Wheeler has been riding motorcycles for 50 years, starting before he legally could and no one has been able to stop him since. He raced in the TT for 16 years, collecting three podiums along the way.



## MSL April

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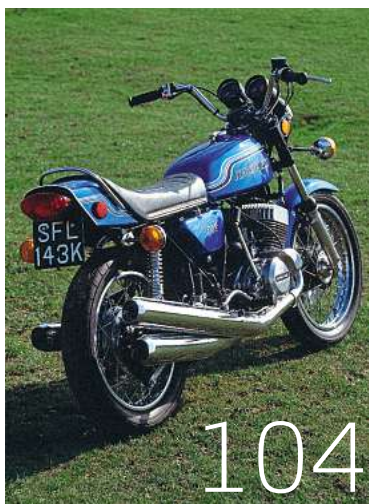
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## NEW

### WORLD LAUNCH: THE KTM DOUBLE-UP

MSL heads overseas to take in the double delights of two new KTM Adventure motorcycles, the 1290 and 1050. One is the all-singing, all-dancing, bigger-engined mothership, the other is a stripped-down version of the original 1190. Two very different takes on the same idea, but which is best?

027

### WORLD LAUNCH: YAMAHA XJR1300

The air-cooled XJR engine has been around for over 30 years (!) and in what will surely be the last gasp of the iconic engine, it now finds itself housed in a funky, 'Yard Built' style chassis and styling exercise for 2015. Southern hemisphere calling for the first run-out of the big blue.

040

### WORLD LAUNCH: YAMAHA R1

It's as state-of-the-art as the art currently gets. MSL has been out on the new yardstick in the superbike class for a few laps of the Eastern Creek circuit in Australia and here's our first thoughts on the bike that's claimed to be as clever as Rossi's GP machine.

048

### DUCATI'S APOLLO V4

It was so nearly a real bike, but a tyre issue proved to be a fatal problem for an iconic motorcycle that you've probably never heard of before. MSL pulled one out of the collection and went for a spin.

052

### WORLD LAUNCH: KAWASAKI VULCAN S

It's a motorbike that's trying to do for the cruiser market what the Er-6f did for the roadster segment. And it shares a lot of the mechanicals across the ideas range too. But how does it perform out on the road? World launch time in Spain along the Almeria mountain roads.



92

## TOURING

068

### OUT THERE

Four weeks of things to do on and off two-wheels, a route to ride and something that's not a lot to do with bikes – but you might like it.

072

### TOURING BIBLE

How roads that change, really change (but you only really find out how much they've changed once you get back on them), if you see what we mean...

080

### THE LONG WEEKEND TOUR: THE D-DAY BEACHES

On a Harley, no less. The perfect way to burn a three-day weekend if you're into that sort of thing.

084

### THE BIG, BIG TOUR: PERU AND CHILE

The second part of the epic ride across the very south Americas. As part of a tour package that anyone can buy to go on.

092

### RIDING NORWAY

Our Alan's taken in the delights of the land of the Viking (to stretch a point or two) and found the locals, the wildlife and the landscapes amazing to be among. Here's his story of the trip.

## KNOWLEDGE

098

### BUYER'S GUIDE: 2006 BONNIE

The archetypal modern Triumph comes under the MSL microscope for all you need to know, should you be after such a fine machine.

104

### REFLECTIONS: THE H2 750 KAWASAKI

In the early 1970s, Kawasaki made a range of air-cooled, three-cylinder two-strokes that epitomised the era. Here's an absolute powerhouse of the age, the 750.



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## One to ride:

**Time to ride:** 2 hours

**Distance:** 60 miles

Situated just a stone's throw from the Spanish town of Benidorm, Panorama's nestled at the base of an overwhelming mountain range, befitting of its name. The day's route takes you inland from the coast, climbing high up into the surrounding arid landscape, on a loop of

Tarmac consistently littered with fantastic bends and great views.

It doesn't matter what bike you're on, you're guaranteed to enjoy the ride, which passes the occasional hamlet complete with roadside eateries and welcoming local faces. Depending on your pace the ride can feel quite physical at times, especially when you find yourself doubling back on some extremely tight bends, but you'll relish the

challenge of reaching those hidden apexes and fending off the persuasive undulations that pop up when you least expect them.

On the whole the ride's first class and the roads are typically empty aside from the occasional quarry lorry or fellow tourist. Two hours is all it takes to traverse, but with so many great tributary roads surrounding this particular path, you'd not have any trouble in extending the route. A truly great ride.



IF YOU'RE PASSING

# PANORAMA LOOP SPAIN





#fortheride

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FOR TAKING IT FURTHER.  
FOR HAVING IT ALL.

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EXPLORER

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On the Road Price	Deposit/Part Exchange	Total Amount of Credit	Agreement Duration	36 Monthly Repayments	Final Repayment	Total Amount Payable	Interest Rate (Fixed)	Representative APR
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Based on: Tiger Explorer  
@ 5,000 miles per annum

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There's a road out there. Way out there.  
Places where you'll appreciate having a little extra.  
Times when you'll appreciate having it all.

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**FOR THE RIDE**

Finance is subject to status and is only available to UK applicants aged 18 and over. TriStar Personal Contract Purchase is only available through Triumph Motorcycle Finance which is a trading style of Black Horse Ltd, St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff CF10 5BH. Finance figures correct as of 05.01.15 and are subject to change. Finance offer ends 30.06.15. \*Accessory Terms and Conditions: Fitting charges may apply. Offer subject to the purchase of a new full price motorcycle. Offer subject to stock availability and applies to motorcycles registered between 05.01.15 and 30.06.15.



# NEW

News ♦ First Rides ♦ Products

## Nearly £6k lopped off Vmax price!

Did you buy a big muscle Yamaha last year? Did you pay £22k for it? Oh dear... oh dear... oh dear...



### New matt grey standard Vmax

The standard Vmax will be offered in a new matt grey version but other than that the bike is unchanged from last year's model in terms of tech spec.

#### VMAX MATT GREY HIGHLIGHTS

- 200bhp 1679cc four-stroke V4 engine
- Low profile aluminium frame
- Short powerplant centres mass for better handling



**T**here's essentially three elements to this story about the 2015 Yamaha Vmax that you need to know.

The first is that Yamaha has gone through a repricing programme. The second is that there's a new Vmax Carbon which looks very sexy. The third is that the standard Vmax has plummeted in price from last year's £21,499 price to a much lower £15,749 – that's a staggering £5750 difference for a standard Vmax over a matter of weeks!

But there's even more news on the Vmax front, here's the latest on the iconic muscle bike.

### New Vmax Carbon

Made as a 30th anniversary special (so to speak) the Vmax Carbon is based on the current 1679cc 200bhp V4 bike.

The bike's petrol tank cover, front and rear



mudguards and side covers are made from carbon fibre and the bike comes equipped with upswept Akrapovic slip-on silencers.

#### VMAX CARBON HIGHLIGHTS

- 200bhp 1679cc V4 liquid-cooled engine
- Exclusive carbon bodywork and Akrapovic silencers
- Aluminium diamond-type twin-spar frame
- Dual 320mm front discs with radial six-pot calipers
- Large diameter 298mm rear disc
- Shaft drive
- Five-spoke alloy wheels with wide 200/50 x 18 rear tyre



# Here's the first official Yard Built Yamaha V-Max

Holy Moly, would you look at this thing!

It's called the 'Infrared' and it's been built by German specials builder JvB-moto in honour of the iconic muscle bike's 30-year anniversary this year.

The Cologne based custom builder Jens vom Brauck (the JvB) is a longtime fan of the Vmax, and credits the machine as one of the sparks that ignited his passion in motorcycles at the age of 15 in 1985.

JvB-moto says that this Vmax Yard Built special is a "radical dragster meets café racer concept" that exaggerates the original bike's brutal look.

Starting at the front end, a custom-made aluminium mudguard sits below a JvB-moto signature style custom carbon fibre headlight unit integrated into the front forks and Motogadget indicators above custom carbon wheel covers. Modified aftermarket clip-on bars and an authentic American dragster rev counter

by Autometer add to the dragster look.

A beautiful custom carbon tank cover sits over a heavily modified airbox and electrics and is complemented by special air intake scoops crafted from stock aluminium units taken from the original 80s Vmax.

The stunning craftsmanship continues with a handmade aluminium subframe crafted from bits of the stock unit and a custom fuel tank placed under the seat, also made from aluminium and holding the same fuel as the standard tank for an unspoiled riding experience.

The rear is beautifully finished with another JvB-moto signature piece, a custom carbon tail unit, handmade by Jens. The exhaust system is modified with a custom 4-1 collector and is finished with a Termignoni silencer.

The bike's paint job is based on the livery of Yamaha's 1985 GP team for real authenticity.

Every custom aluminium and carbon part on this Yard Built special was handmade by JvB-moto.

"The Yamaha Vmax has been an icon without rival since it burst on to the streets in 1985 as the ultimate drag racer inspired street bike," said Shun Miyazawa, product manager at Yamaha Motor Europe. "To respect the culture that has grown around this icon we've chosen to celebrate 30 years of the Vmax by working with three highly respected custom builders to create three Vmax specials that will inspire not just Yamaha, but also owners of the Vmax and those who maybe want to own one.

"We're starting this exciting anniversary build year with cult German builder JvB-moto. We are huge fans of his work, and feel his minimalistic, industrial style fits well with the Vmax."



## Iconic Vmax designer dies

The designer of the original, iconic Vmax motorcycle has died aged 85.

Kenji Ekuan was also responsible for other design classics including the Narita Express airport train and the globally-famous Japanese soy sauce bottle.

Ekuan, a former Buddhist monk, was the recipient of several awards, including the prestigious Italian design prize the Golden Compass Award, which he received last year.



## Good trip coming up

Now this is a cool trip that's coming up and we want to tell you about it because we like these people. This is the PEMC touring group (you may remember their exploits abroad from previous issues of MSL over the years). The PEMC is a group of older riders who love riding, seeing the world and not going everywhere at 200mph. They're just like a lot of you.

And what they've done is come up with their first tour that you can take part in. It's a 19 night trip to Morocco, leaving on Sunday, May 10, and getting back to the UK on May 29.

Excluding UK mileage, the trip will take in 2600 miles of Morocco and Spain and is packed with spectacular sights



including: the Rif Mountains, Atlas Mountains, Tizi n'Tichka Pass, Fes, Road of a Thousand Kasbahs and Chefchaouen – Morocco's Blue City.

Prices are £699 per person excluding ferries to Spain, £999 including ferries to Spain and

there are 22 places available. It sounds like it could be a great trip and if you fancy taking part then get in touch with the PEMC and tell them we sent you. You can get hold of PEMC at: [roger.gill@widenis.co.uk](mailto:roger.gill@widenis.co.uk) or call: 01423 781172.

## GB MOTOGP TURMOIL LEADS TO VENUE CHANGE

First it was Wales, then Donington and now Silverstone has stepped in to save the home round

It's been a mad few weeks in terms of where the British round of this year's MotoGP championship will be held. For a while now we've known that the original plan to hold it at the proposed Circuit of Wales (CoW) venue wasn't doable and that Donington Park had agreed terms with CoW to run the event over the August 28-30 weekend.

But two weeks into February, Donington announced that it wouldn't be holding the meeting after all following contract issues between the Leicestershire track and CoW.

The following day MotoGP owner Dorna made the announcement that Silverstone in Northampton was now going to take over running the event, in effect saving the British round of the MotoGP championship for 2015 and 2016.

Patrick Allen, managing director of Silverstone, said: "A lot of work has been done over recent years to ensure MotoGP fans enjoy what Silverstone has to offer and it was devastating for the venue to lose the event last autumn."

Michael Carrick, chief executive of Circuit of Wales, added: "We are delighted about the agreement with Silverstone to host the 2015 and 2016 British rounds of MotoGP. We want to thank the new

management at Silverstone, our partners at Dorna and our investors for the rapid response needed to support the 2015 event when it became clear that we would be unlikely to conclude the contractual arrangements at Donington.

"We are delighted to secure the future of the event for the next two years while our circuit in Wales is under construction. Today's announcement ensures we will have the 2015 British Round of MotoGP."



## NEXT MONTH THE NEW SUPER-DUPER MULTISTRADA!



▶ 160bhp (10 more than the old bike)

▶ Lots more torque

▶ New motor

▶ New face and body too!

MSL heads out to the world launch to go all long-travel suspension on what could well be a beast. Or a pussycat. Or something in-between. We'll find out.

**PLUS!**

## SUZUKI'S V-STROM 650XT GETS RIDDEN



▶ Lightweight wheels

▶ All dressed up

▶ Beaky new face

It's Suzuki's best-selling motorcycle and has hundreds of thousands of fans around the world. But can the latest version keep up with a market littered with lots of hot-dog competition? We'll tell you first.

**ALL THAT AND PLENTY MORE GOING FROM THE SHARP SIDE OF MOTORCYCLING. MSL #656 IS ON SALE FROM MARCH 6**



## Traffic cop numbers plummet by a quarter

### Warnings that wrongdoers 'will not get caught'

British roads have lost nearly a quarter of the traffic police they had just four years ago – according to the Government's own figures.

Overall, the number of traffic police in England and Wales fell 23% over the four year period. The total number of officers plummeted from 5635 at the end of March 2010 to 4356 by the end of March 2014 with only the counties of Suffolk and Warwickshire having more traffic police at the end of the period than it did at the start.

RAC head of external affairs Pete Williams said: "These figures make a mockery of motoring law. If there are not enough police on the road, we can introduce all the new rules we want, but those breaking them just will not get caught."

"While cameras are good at catching speeders and drivers who go through red lights,



offences that relate to general poor behaviour at the wheel still rely on a police officer to enforce them."

Last week, the Institute of Advanced Motorists added that many years of government cutbacks had resulted in a "drop

in visible policing".

Neil Greig, director of policy and research, said: "It is disappointing that after many years of solid falls in the numbers of people killed and injured on our roads, the Government has taken its eye off the ball."

## The biggest drops

Devon and Cornwall is the area that has seen the largest drop in numbers. The total number of traffic officers fell from 239 in 2010 to just 57 in 2014 – which is a drop of 76%. At one period of time, from March 2012 to 2013, Devon and Cornwall had no full-time traffic officers.

In Essex, the number fell 71%. Nick Alston, police and crime commissioner for Essex, said his force had to use officers "where the most harm is".

He said: "The chief constable has applied a real clear understanding of demand. They have done the science, they've done the analysis, when do they need road officers on the road policing, and that's helped hugely to have the right officers in the right place."

"It would be great to have more but we have to use our officers where the most harm to the public is."

## Suzuki sticks luggage on GSX1250FA as standard

### Practical bits now on solid sports-tourer for under £8k all-in

Suzuki's GSX1250FA sports-tourer is now available with a full luggage set as standard. Available in a black finish or candy red for 2015, the GSX1250FA now comes complete with a top box and panniers as

standard, with a combined capacity of 105 litres.

The inclusion of fitted luggage as standard doesn't add anything to the price though – £7999 will bag it for you.

Also announced by the Japanese manufacturer is a new

'Sport' variant model to the V-Strom 1000 stable for 2015. There are already Adventure and Desert versions of the adventure bike in the range.

Costing £9799, the V-Strom 1000 Sport is only available in black and comes with a Yoshimura Hepta Force exhaust. It also features a decal set, belly pan, hand guards, engine bars and a chainguard.

The V-Strom 1000 Sport is available from authorised dealerships now. Both models are

also available on Suzuki's current 50/50, interest free finance campaign, which means customers can either pay half the cost of the agreed sale price up front – or pay nothing if using a trade-in worth half the bike's value – and pay half in two years' time.

For more information on both the GSX1250FA and V-Strom 1000 Sport, as well as the 50/50 finance campaign go to: [www.suzuki-gb.co.uk](http://www.suzuki-gb.co.uk)



## More bikes on the 50/50 campaign

Suzuki has announced an expansion to the 50/50 finance campaign currently running which means that the scheme will now run until the end of March 2015.

There are new models joining the offer too. Both the

V-Strom 650 and XT version will join the V-Strom 1000 Adventure as part of the scheme along with the Hayabusa and Hayabusa Z, GSR750 and the GSR750Z model, GSX1250FA, and Burgman 650 Executive.



# Super Bike Highways, to hell?

**Leon Mannings**



**A**polologies to those who missed my column in the last issue but it's easily found on *MSL's* website if you type evidence in the search box. The crucial meetings I mentioned about plans for highways that are supposed to be super for cyclists happened, and clarified what they mean for the rest of us. Basically, the most radical proposals to promote cycling ever in the UK will be incalculably bad for motorcyclists, and all other road users apart from cyclists.

Despite a lot of work behind the scenes in some of the most critical meetings I've set up for MAG, the positive role of motorcycling in urban areas where 80% of the UK population live, has been ignored. It is also set to be ruthlessly cut, and in two equally inescapable and relentless ways.

A £216m raft of Cycle Super Highway (CSH) schemes is signed off for completion by 2016, and looks set to render the efficiency of motorcycles down to the same level as cars. Sounds bad? It is. But for now it will 'only' be bad for congestion, journey times, air quality, motorcyclists' safety, and most people in London out to the M25. And, in addition to the stupendous costs to complete, TfL says it will deliver £200m of disbenefits as well. But that estimate may be as unrealistic as the artist's impressions of the plans, as I tried to warn the TfL Board, and you can see at: <http://is.gd/Q5tUz0>

The spread of schemes to promote cycling has been going on for years as there is more Government cash up for grabs to push cycling than anything else on public roads. But the measures that are about to be imposed are far more crippling for all other road users than any I've seen anywhere. A cunning combination of measures has been cooked up to increase the impact of cycle only lanes to an unprecedented level. It's like boosting the power of a standard engine by adding twin turbochargers. This may be good for the 3% of transport that is facilitated by bicycles, but it will certainly be bad for biking on bikes with motors.

Turbo charging measure type one involves miles of hard engineering schemes that drastically cut road space for motorcyclists – and convert it into exclusive lanes for cyclists. But the widths of lanes left for 'general traffic' are so narrow that filtering will be impossible at countless critical points. This will decimate the efficiency of all motorcycles, including bikes that the emergency services increasingly depend on to get through congested traffic. Narrowed lanes for bikers will also increase risks of casualties. The second turbo charging measure is far more powerful but easily missed. It involves a London-wide escalation in

Radical plans for UK roads have been sold with visions of how heavenly life could be for some bikers, but Doc M wonders if they are highways to hell for others...

use of the only other thing that can hold up motorbikes, i.e. traffic lights set to red for longer than needed for safety reasons.

Experience from the Olympics enabled TfL to prove that using traffic lights as a 'gating' mechanism is a great way to stop traffic entering areas where use by a tiny minority is to be prioritised. Traffic gating also has the great political benefit of not being seen as the real cause of huge increases in congestion. Recent meetings with the senior TfL officers responsible for these schemes clarified how bad the proposals would be for bikers, and led to this conclusion. The bottom line from the top of TfL seemed to be this: The extent to which the benefits of motorcycling or adverse impacts of CSHs are being overlooked may seem illogical, iniquitous and likely to limit our options for meeting demand for long overdue progress. But, these unprecedentedly high impact cuts in road capacity are driven by huge political pressures to change London before the current Mayoralty ends.

However, I'd add more. Key policy shapers fervently believe that cycling deserves far more positive attention than motorcycling. And, they have skilfully nurtured political and media support for a view that cycling without motors is the only game in town to be taken really seriously – apart from walking and public transport.

Right now, motorcycling is set to be shafted in London by 2016, and maybe in other urban areas next. Movement by road for the vast majority of people and goods will be a worse nightmare than ever. Air quality will plummet, but nobody knows how much by, as full Environmental Impact Studies weren't done or published.

Many key organisations are privately opposed to the proposals as they see more hell than heaven ahead. But most are so afraid of attack by hardcore cycling zealots, or bound by political or funding considerations, that their public position is to support them. The politics of fear will always be a factor, but I remain hopeful that MAG and other groups will continue to fight back, and for equal rights for all bikers – and not just a favoured few who ride without motors.

## Who is Mannings?

Leon is MSL's political man. Working within the corridors of power Dr Mannings is consistently on the inside picking up the big political changes and whispers that threaten to change the motorcycle world we all inhabit. Always on the side of the biker, Leon is a hard-edged, educated campaigner for two-wheeled rights and has been hugely influential where it really matters



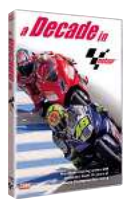
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### A DECADE IN MOTOGP

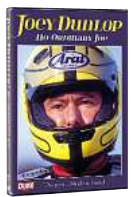


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Celebrating 10 years of the world's premier motorcycle world championship, this official documentary charts 10 years of headline-making MotoGP history.

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### JOEY DUNLOP - NO ORDINARY JOE



RRP: £19.99  
Running Time: 101 mins  
This is a fascinating new documentary about motorcycle icon Joey Dunlop, world champion,

26-time IoM TT winner and tireless charity worker.

No Ordinary Joe includes tributes to the star who died in a crash in 2000 from Joey's wife Linda and his family plus John McGuinness, Steve Parrish, commentator Richard Nichols, Phillip McCallen, Eddie Laycock, Hector Neill, Barry Symmons and Brian Reid.

Never-before-published pictures of the Ballymoney hero are provided from his family's private collection, are also included in the documentary.

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## ★Star Letter

### 'Motorcycle Day' idea is a winner!

Dear MSL,

I'm really liking the idea of employers offering their staff a 'motorcycle day' to encourage more people to start commuting on bikes and scooters. It gets over the problem of increasing congestion and the extortionate cost of rail tickets in this country.

I really hope somebody in Government has read this idea and wants to put it in motion. Maybe they could also cut taxes on smaller bikes to further encourage pick-up among the commuting belt.

**Peter Tilledge**  
Email

### Motorcycle Day' will never happen

Dear MSL,

It's a nice idea but nothing like that would ever happen here because we're not a motorcycle-interested country.

If I called up my boss and asked for a motorcycle day because it was too cold for me to ride in to work then I know the response and it would most likely end up with me getting the boot. So, as much as I hate riding on the awful trains every day, I'm going to have to for a while yet.

**Mark Cuttle**  
Email

### I'm having a 'Motorcycle day' today, boss...

**Tony Carter**



In another life I worked for some of the national newspapers. After the New Year there was always the 'usual' type of story to write up: interest rates announced, how well (or poorly) M&S had done over the festive period, how much commuters have to fork out for the coming year's annual rail pass - that sort of thing.

So, when I see those sorts of stories surfacing annually I pay very close attention. A bit of me wants to see how the story is treated by various newsrooms these days but the motorcycleist in me wants to find out how much people are willing to pay to stand in a cramped, often late, not very clean, depressing and altogether unpleasant metal tube filled with other people's farts while travelling to a soulless job in a soulless city wearing a soulless suit.

Gawd.

So the rail figures came in among the usual wailing, gnashing of teeth and wringing of hands by disgruntled commuters who bunched in front of a TV camera for a few seconds of complaint, before heading off to the nearest ticket booth to no doubt buy this year's travel entitlement.

The figures for the average commute seemed to balance out around the £5000 mark. Five grand!

I was talking about that very figure with good friend, and editor of *Scotter* magazine, Andy Gillard. Andy and I agreed that for £5k it would be very easy to get a second-hand bike, all the kit, cover running costs and still have change for a fish supper and a night out at The Ritz.

Andy pointed out that if a commuter wanted a brand new vehicle, kit and all that jazz then from his world that could still be done with something that has a name that could really appeal to non-motorcyclists: Vespa.

A quick costing saw a Vespa GTS 300, kit and running costs coming in for less than £5k for the year. The Vespa will sit at 80mph all day long and is easy to

Nobody move. I've got an idea! (With apologies to Maurice Joseph Micklewhite)

get 80mph from as long as you're not ragging the throttle. Sounds good.

Let's not forget that at the end of the year you've got quite a bit of residual value in the scooter too. A quick scan of the classified ads in *Scotter* had GT5s that were seven years old going for £2500. I wonder how much an annual rail card is worth six years after the year-long period it was originally bought for?

Andy and I talked about why 'people might not take the two-wheeled route and, of course, weather seemed a spectre on the horizon. So we came up with a possible solution: how about 'Scooter days' or even 'Motorbike days'? Used like 'Duvet days' where, in this world of remote-working possibilities it's where people can work remotely from home.

It's can't be above the realms of possibility that if the weather is too ropery for all but the most hardy of riders to commute, then they can call in a pre-agreed 'Scooter day' option and work from home.

Surely the vast majority of train-bound misery is office based. And if it is, then it's fairly easy for them to work remotely, and that's something that's only going to get easier as the years go on. If we can take away the supposed horror of riding in the ropery-est weather (if that is in fact the main reason why people aren't swapping the choo-choo for two-wheels) then we'll boost our numbers massively.

What do you think, any mileage in this idea?

**Tony Carter**  
Editor

### MSL: Meet the Team



**Bruce Wilson**  
MSL's deputy editor started riding aged 10. He's 27 now. Bruce has written for *Motorcycle Rider*, *MCN*, *Classic Motorcycle Mechanics* and others, before joining MSL three years ago. He has since tested almost every new bike launched.



**Roland Brown**  
Has ridden for 37 years and been a bike journalist for more than 30. At Bike he ended up as deputy editor before going freelance. An author of 11 books, as a racer he was Benesse 1300 champion 1984 and raced UK F1, Superstock and Superbike, plus World F1 races.



**Alan Cathcart**  
Has been writing about bikes for over 30 years, and riding them for even longer. He's regularly given the keys to factory prototypes and being on first name terms with the bosses of bike companies around the world allows him to bag many scoops.



**Chris Moss**  
Mossy has raced the Isle of Man TT, dispatched in London and ridden everything from CX500s to full-blown GP prototypes. A former chief motorcycle tester for *Motor Cycle News*, the 53-year-old admits he's still loving two-wheeled life, and still learning.



**Malc Wheeler**  
Has been riding motorcycles for 50 years, starting before he legally could and no one has been able to stop him since. He raced in the TT for 16 years, collecting three podiums along the way.

[mslmagazine.co.uk](http://mslmagazine.co.uk) 3

### 'Motorcycle Day' I already do it!

Dear MSL,

The idea for an official 'Motorcycle Day' was an interesting one but it's not needed! I've been doing this

myself for years. If it gets too cold, or icy, or wet then I just pull a sickie and that sorts it out. I get to ride my bike when I want and I don't have to when it's not a decent day. It's a better solution than anything to do with trains.

**Anon (by request)**  
Email

## That's nice... HOW MUCH!?

Dear MSL,

I read with interest the recent review on the KTM Freeride E-SM electric bike in *MSL* and enjoyed it very much.

The technology for this type of bike really seems to be coming along at a quick pace now.

The fact that new riders can squeeze a bit more power out of the rules and regulations and still operate within the law is very encouraging to an old fart like me, who used to ride around

illegally on an old X7 250 Suzuki!

But then I saw the price of this so-called learner's bike - 11,500 euro! I can't believe that at that price KTM will sell a single one of these bikes to the sort of person that exactly these sort of bikes should be being sold to.

Maybe it's all clever marketing and what KTM is trying to do is sell this sort of bike to the older rider as a bit of modern technology that they can use and enjoy instead of

something like the latest super-phone in their pocket which nobody knows how to use!

Older riders have the money.  
**Brian Williams**  
Email

*Good point, I don't even know if they could price this tech down to a level suitable for the new rider, but if it happens then it will shoot this whole world of sparks and speed into the stratosphere. TC*







## KTM 1290 Super Adventure

# FUTURE SHOCK

This is the biggest of the big Adventure bikes from the Austrians. It's a full-on tech assault on the world of the mile-eaters. And it's a flag carrier for the new era of modern motorcycling.

**W**hen KTM launched a bike rather grandly named 1290 Super Adventure, we knew it had to reach great heights, otherwise it would be consigned to the annals of motorcycle history. Super Adventure? We'll see...

So, right from the off, I'll lay my cards on the table. This is an amazing bike. It may just be the best bike made in this sector so far. It's the big, big Adventure I'd go for as I sit here writing this world launch report.

It's pricey at £16,000. And it looks physically huge. For many the fact that it's got the wrong three letters on the tank and no shaft drive will be enough to write this off as a bad idea made real. But they'd be wrong. Really, hugely wrong. Gary Barlow's tax accountant wrong.

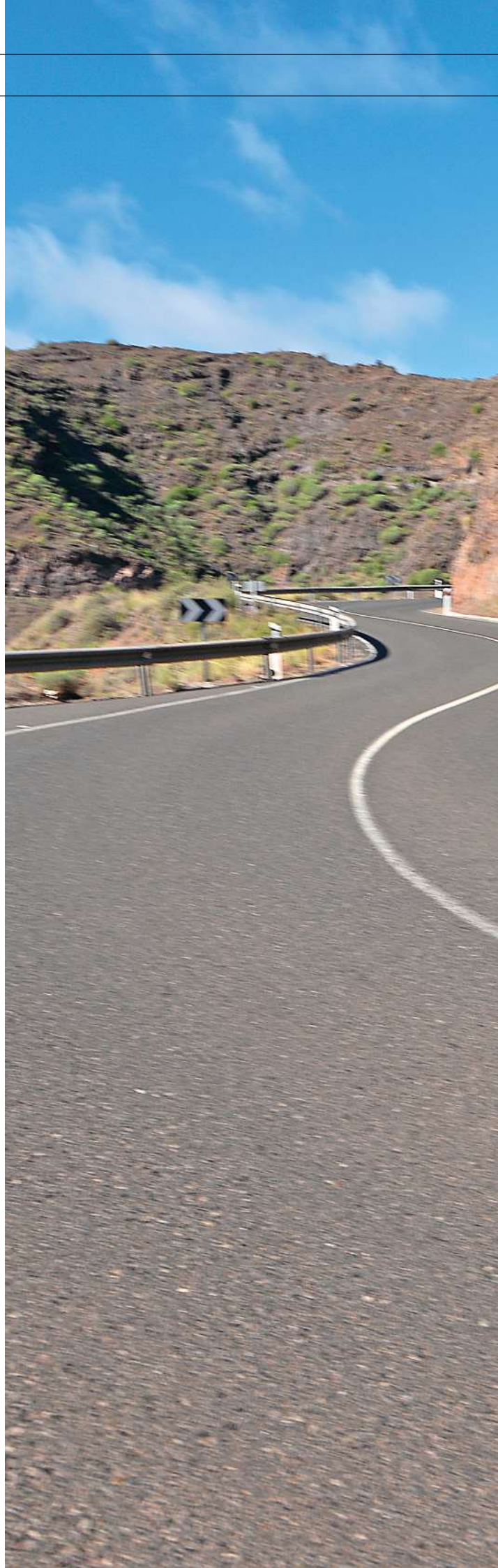
So, what to know about this newest of new from the party-boys in Austria. Essentially this is a big bore 1190 Adventure with cylinders and pistons from the awesome Super Duke 1290 launched just over a year ago. And it's dripping with top tourer tech.

Kicking out 160bhp compared to a BMW R1200GSA's 125 with a lot more torque (103lb-ft at 6500rpm compared to the German's 92lb-ft at the same revs) and a stomping 77lb-ft of that Austrian oomph available at just 2500rpm, you can see that KTM has gone down the big power route.

But there's more to it than just impressive figures. The Austrians call this the 'luxury' tourer and that's largely down to the semi-active suspension, a live system that's a first for KTM and changes damping in real time underneath you as you ride. It reacts to how aggressive (or not) you're being with the throttle, the type of road surface the suspension is sensing and levels of grip, lean and wheel slip. Monitoring the world thousands of times a second, this latest innovation might just be one of those iconic moments, a specific birth in motorcycle history.

This bike is now the top of the KTM Adventure family. It's a family that has four bikes in it with the 1290, 1190 R, 1190 and the new-licence friendly 1050 (which is reviewed here a few pages on). KTM is pushing the 1290 as the state-of-the-art in Adventure tourers. And honestly, I'm finding it hard to argue with that.

Let's just get the bits you'll notice in the dealer's shop window out of the way first. There's all new styling with a massive screen, mounted into the fairing just under the shoulders are the cornering LED lights which light up as needed on each side of the bike as you corner. Get lower in the turn and more lights appear. The idea is, that this helps you see as you corner. The reality is that it looks very cool indeed and more than once did I spend too long watching bikes in the mirror as they pitched hard over left then right through a long tunnel just to see the left, then right lights flash on and off in turn.





NEW





## HEATED SEATS

Both the rider and pillion seats are independently controllable with a dial for adjustment sited just under the right-hand side of the pillion seat.

## CRUISE CONTROL

Works in fourth, fifth and sixth gears and from 40 to 200kph. The 1290 gets a new 'extra roll to close' throttle, which means you can exit the system by rolling the throttle away from you as well as by touching any lever with hand or foot.

## CORNERING LIGHTS

Three LED segments housed on each side of the fairing. At 10° of lean the lowest segment lights up, at 20° the second and 30° the third. It's triggered by angle of lean detected by the bike's Traction Control system.

## DAMPING MODES

There are four that can be chosen from; Comfort, Street, Sport and Off-road.

## REAR SHOCK

WP unit carried the electromagnetic valve which allows the live adjustment on the move, the shock has preload, rebound and compression damping.

## CRANKSHAFT

New crankshaft with more rotating mass on the flywheel and rotor. There's also an anti-backlash gear on the primary wheel which transfers the power to the clutch without backlash to eliminate vibration and reduction in engine noise.

## ENGINE

The 75° V-twin is taken out to 1301cc and gets the cylinders, pistons and con rod from the 1290 Super Duke with the bigger bore and stroke. The bike kicks out 160bhp with 103lb-ft of peak torque at 6750rpm but makes a huge 77lb-ft of torque at just 2500rpm for great driveability.

## FORKS

WP forks are 48mm and run the semi-active system. The right leg carries the actuator for the live adjustment, while the left fork leg has the sensor for the system built into it.



The bike looks big and top-heavy. But it's not. A lot of the weight is kept low and the 1290 is very nimble at speed or pottering pace, new cosmetics keep the enduro-style big shoulder and the firm has spent a lot of time re-routing air flow across the top of the motor so that hot air doesn't hit the rider in the vegetables – an old fault of the 1190 on long rides. It works, kind of. If the old system was 100% bad then this new one is about 30% of that. You can still get a bit cooked at 20° plus, if you're riding at a 'brisk and spirited pace'.

The seat is new, the brakes are familiar and the subframe has an integrated luggage carrying system built in. Pillions have their own dial-control for the heated pillion seat and that big windshield is easy to adjust with its own dial system and no tools.

It's hard to get away from the tech on this bike, in fact it's impossible. You get to choose the suspension setting you want, the amount of load on the bike, the amount of power and aggressive(ness) of the throttle action too. This is in four riding modes and four suspension modes. Accessing

## The brains behind the live suspension - Stefan Haist, team leader of the electronics chassis control systems



### How big an area of KTM is the electronics side, these days?

It's big. We have three areas of electronics in KTM. There's the chassis control system which includes traction control, ABS, semi active suspension stuff like that and we have the electronic department responsible for hardware, SCU, communication, dashboard and then there's the EMS department which is responsible for engine applications, mapping and stuff like that.

### Is having three separate areas within the electronics department easy to manage?

The fact that we have three different electronic groups working on a bike like that is the biggest challenge really. Three departments give you some idea of how many sensors, programmes, how much electronics there are in there. The challenge is to get all of that working in harmony. So you're making sure that all departments are using the same sensors and hardware and getting all of that on one line is quite a challenge.

For KTM perhaps this is more of a challenge just because all the systems are new. We released the 1190 with some of the electronics on that bike but

even over the course of a single year we have seen that speed of development in that area is incredible.

### There's a lot of electronics on the 1290 but which part of it are you most proud of in a professional sense?

I'm most proud of the semi-active suspension. This is a big step forward in KTM in terms of suspension, so that's the one thing that I am proud of, I think also that the engine guys did a very good job with the whole engine – that's a big step forward.

There is a whole thing about the potential for the future with the semi-active suspension too. This is a totally new world of suspension that we're entering – I think it's amazing, the level of comfort of the bike in comfort mode – if you start pushing it then it really does follow you and your riding as and how you're pushing it. It doesn't wobble or have any funny behaviour, there's no soft shaking or rocking when you've got the bike in Comfort mode and want to ride it in a more aggressive manner. The bike will always do what you want it to do, you can cruise along in high comfort but then it can go to where you want it.

It was quite a challenge to work out how to have the bike react to what you want it to do, how to have it react to what's going on with your riding style and how it also reacts to the changing ground underneath you, different surfaces etc.

### What's the most critical part of making the semi-active system work?

The speed of the whole system is a critical thing, of course. Especially if you ride in sports mode for example, where the suspension set up is stiffer. What the system needs to do is when it detects a bump it can open up the damping. So you want supportive, strong damping but when you need comfort you have comfortable damping. But the problem is how you detect a bump, you need the acceleration sensor to do that so when it detects the bump it's already in the handlebar so it needs to be as quick as it can to open the damping, the same thing with the anti-dive effect.

In the first ideas we worked with about how the anti-dive works, we took the braking pressure to react to and use to change the damping pressure – but we figured out that it was already too late because the pressure's already there. So we ended up working from the gradient of the braking pressure, because that is just a millisecond earlier that you can see that and it gives you that little benefit because you don't want to feel the front diving and then have it holding it, you want to hold it before it dives in because otherwise you'll feel the reaction of the semi-active suspension and that was our main target to not feel that.

It works with pressure starting to increase by a very small amount and then the system works very fast to hold it. You can't be cute about it, you can't try to build in some delay or something for character sake, because you need the system in real time to be reacting and working so fast.

You need to be that quick otherwise you already have the movement in the bike and if you react then you will feel the reaction which is what you don't want.

You would dive in on the front end, then react, then hit a bump then mess up your line

because the geometry changes then it stops changing and what would you do? That's not a nice way of riding like that. It's the same with anti-squat and stuff like that too, you need the system to react as quick as it can, especially if you want to have a sporty suspension.

### Will this semi-active suspension system be used on smaller bikes? Could we see it on something like the KTM RC390 for example?

Not at the moment no, the big benefit of the semi-active system is that it gives you such a huge range of what you can do on the bike and this is exactly what you want to do on a big enduro like this. On a smaller bike you have shorter wheel travel or that range of usage, maybe I would answer differently in five years' time but for now I don't see this system on a smaller bike.

### How long did it take to come up with and execute the semi-active suspension system? It's unique in the way it works so you've had to build it all from scratch.

From day one until the bike, when they started developing it I wasn't in the team back then, but that was in 2011 they started with the very first prototype. So that's five years which is a long time, we also developed and built a whole new separate model bike in the same amount of time it's taken to develop our semi-active suspension. It's all new, the hardware and software is all new. There's nothing off the shelf we could go to for this, so we had to literally build every single part for every part, step and idea of development. Remember too that WP was also developing this with us for the same period of time, that makes this a huge, huge step. It's a big development in hardware, software and strategy.



## How the semi-active suspension works

It's all about very exact maths. Basically, what happens, is that the electronic brain (the Vehicle CAN Bus) works directly with the SCU (suspension control unit) to adjust the suspension in real time underneath you as you ride.

These changes depend on the condition of the surface beneath you and the throttle/power settings, plus there's a direct correlation between what the suspension is doing and the way you crack the throttle, too. Lean angle is also a player in the equations as is the amount of slip being detected by the system on both the front and back wheels. Phew.

Up front, sited at the bottom of the right fork leg, is the stroke sensor which monitors the rate of movement. At the top of the forks is the front accelerometer with the rear accelerometer living behind the very bottom of the petrol tank housing. There's also a rear suspension stroke sensor on the monoshock.

The mechanics of making the suspension move is taken care of by seamless adjusters housed alongside the rear shock and in the top of the forks.

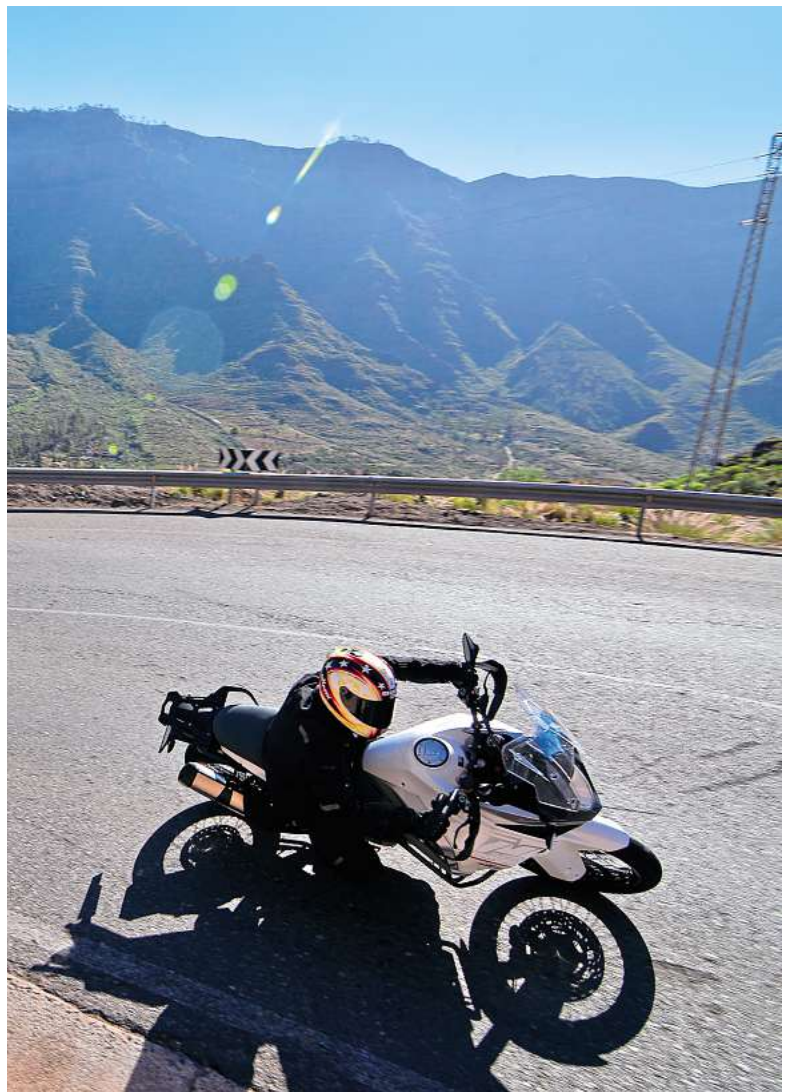
As you're riding along, the sensors and accelerometers are carrying out thousands of calculations per second, but it's how they interpret those that's where the real genius is. Having suspension units react to something like a bump while the bike is leant over or a slide under hard acceleration on a dodgy bit of Tarmac, means that the incident



that could cause a problem is already over by the time the system reacts, and most likely there's now something else happening which the suspension now also has to monitor, change the adjustment program it was just trying to bring in and then effect that change. Doing semi-active suspension in that way means the system is continuously running to try and catch up with what's just happened to the bike.

So, what the WP/KTM system does, is run a massive series of logarithmic calculations that are interlinked. Think of it like a series of 'what if' questions on a flow chart, with the suspension constantly using thousands of possible changes to it as the template for change ahead of the flow of the chart, so that it can effectively predict the future by a fraction of a second and be ready for what's needed. It's a system which actually predicts the future in macroseconds and uses it to deliver the perfect set-up for whatever's going on as you're riding.

Now that's just a bit special. And clever, obviously...

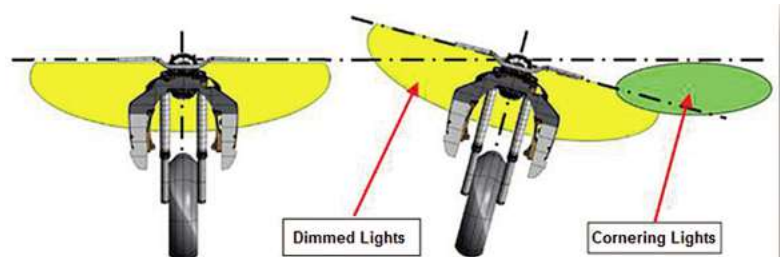


these is very, very simple. Just two presses of a button will navigate you around the large and easy to understand digital screen and from there you make your choices. You can make the choices on the move should you want to. Once you get used to this system it becomes second nature and really does give you another second or third string to your riding bow.

How the semi-active suspension feels on the move is actually quite hard to describe. Mainly because you can't feel it working, but you're aware that something's going on underneath. As the bike's springers change damping in line with the way you're riding, you can feel the bike stiffen or relax

accordingly. It's the fact that this happens without you doing anything other than working the throttle or throwing the bike into a corner which is the new sensation. There's a real sense of the bike being alive around you and aware of what you want. Then it delivers the right damping in the right way at the right time. After a couple of corners you can just forget about the tech and get back to that lovely art of riding big bikes fast. But the second you decide you want to roll off and plod for a bit, the bike relaxes around you and the luxurious super tourer is back.

For the majority of the launch ride I set the suspension to Comfort mode



The more you lean over, the more lights come on to show you the way.



and had the throttle on Sport. I wanted to see how quickly the suspension could react to very aggressive, full-on power, snapping on and off between perilous switchback mountain roads and still return to luxurious plodding comfort when I had to roll off the gas for the odd little town. And I'm telling you now that it's amazing. The semi-active suspension worked perfectly, despite hours of me trying to upset the applegart with lots of purposefully ham-fisted blasts of full-on KTM power.

Brakes, chassis and even dash are familiar in look and feel. If you've ridden a big KTM before then the 1290 feels very much like the 1190 but wider and more upright. There's plenty of legroom, a full day of hard riding didn't suffer from one bit of cramp, and I can't imagine anyone having issues with the ergonomics of the 1290.

So it's all good. Aside from two small points. The first is that screen – it's a great screen and deflects a lot of wind, but it's just an inch too tall for the 5ft 8in me and as such it's when the bike's leant right over I found that the top inch of the screen was slap bang in my line of sight. There is a simple, although unofficial, cure for this – take



**LEFT: The 1290 is sublime in the way it talks to the rider. Twisty roads are its natural ground - and so are miles and miles of touring motorways too.**

the screen off, turn around the brackets for it and mount the screen back into position. Voila, inch lower. I could have just raised the seat unit up by 10mm to cure it too, but I like riding more 'in' the bike than on top of it, so I didn't.

The second gripe is the seat padding. It's okay but only okay. There's not enough foam around the shoulders of the seat where the bottom of your thigh sits. I'm not saying it's

## Closest rival



### BMW R1200GS ADVENTURE TE £15,510

When it comes to genuine large capacity adventure bikes, few machines can be considered in the same company as BMW's R1200GS Adventure.

Released to the market in 2014, the latest water-cooled option produces 125bhp, has the option of five different rider modes and comes equipped with state-of-the-art electronically adjustable suspension (ESA).

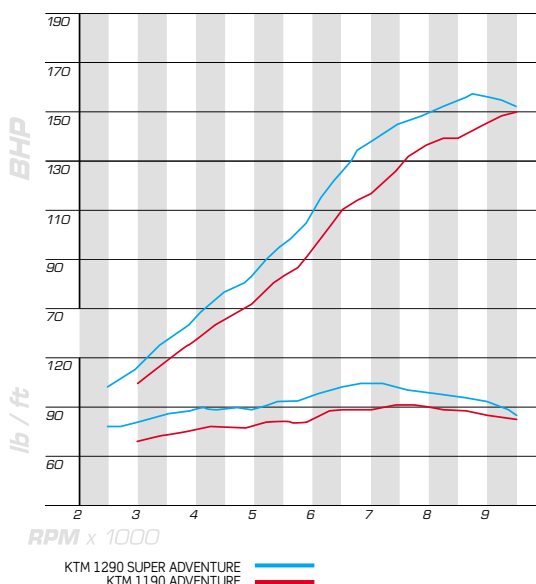
Combined with the bike's programmable engine outputs and traction control systems, this means the 220kg heavyweight can be made extremely agile and purposeful both on- and off-road, complemented further by its usable and character-rich Boxer-twin motor.

The bike's also extremely comfortable over long distance hauls, with adjustability factored into its seats (rider and pillion) as well as the large standard windscreen, which can be adjusted up or down on the go using a turn wheel.

If the GS was to have a downfall, it would be its sheer size, with a seat height towering away at 890mm. Its weight can seem overwhelming too, especially when performing foot-powered manoeuvres with its 30 litre tank brimmed, the bike laden with luggage and a pillion on-board. But the good news is, that once the wheels are turning the ride becomes effortless. A fantastic bike that's extremely popular for many great reasons.



### 1290 KTM SUPER ADVENTURE





## Specification

### KTM 1290 SUPER ADVENTURE - £15,999

**Engine:** 2-cylinder, 4-stroke, 75° V-twin

**Displacement:** 1301cc

**Bore/stroke:** 108 x 71mm

**Power:** 160bhp @ 8750rpm

**Torque:** 103lb-ft @ 6750rpm

**Compression ratio:** 13.1:1

**Transmission:** Six gears

**Fuel system:** Keihin EFI (throttle body 52mm)

**Cooling:** Liquid

**Clutch:** PASC slipper clutch, hydraulically operated

**Engine management/ignition:** Keihin EMS with Ride-By-Wire and cruise control, double ignition

**Traction control:** MTC (4-modes, disengageable)

**Frame:** Chromium-molybdenum-steel trellis frame, powder coated

**Subframe:** Aluminium powder coated

**Handlebar:** Aluminium tapered 28/22mm

**Front suspension:** WP semi-active USD 48mm

**Rear suspension:** WP semi-active monoshock

**Front brake:** 2x Brembo four piston, radially-mounted caliper on a 320mm brake disc

**Rear brake:** 2x Brembo four piston, radially-mounted caliper on a 320mm brake disc

**ABS:** Bosch 9ME Combined-ABS (including Cornering-ABS and off-road mode, disengageable)

**Front wheel:** Spoked wheel with aluminium tubeless rims, 3.5 x 19in

**Rear wheel:** Spoked wheel with aluminium tubeless rims, 5.00 x 17in

**Front tyre:** 120/70 R19

**Rear tyre:** 170/60 R17

**Steering head angle:** 64°

**Trail:** 120mm

**Wheelbase:** 1560 (+ or - 15mm)

**Ground clearance:** 220mm

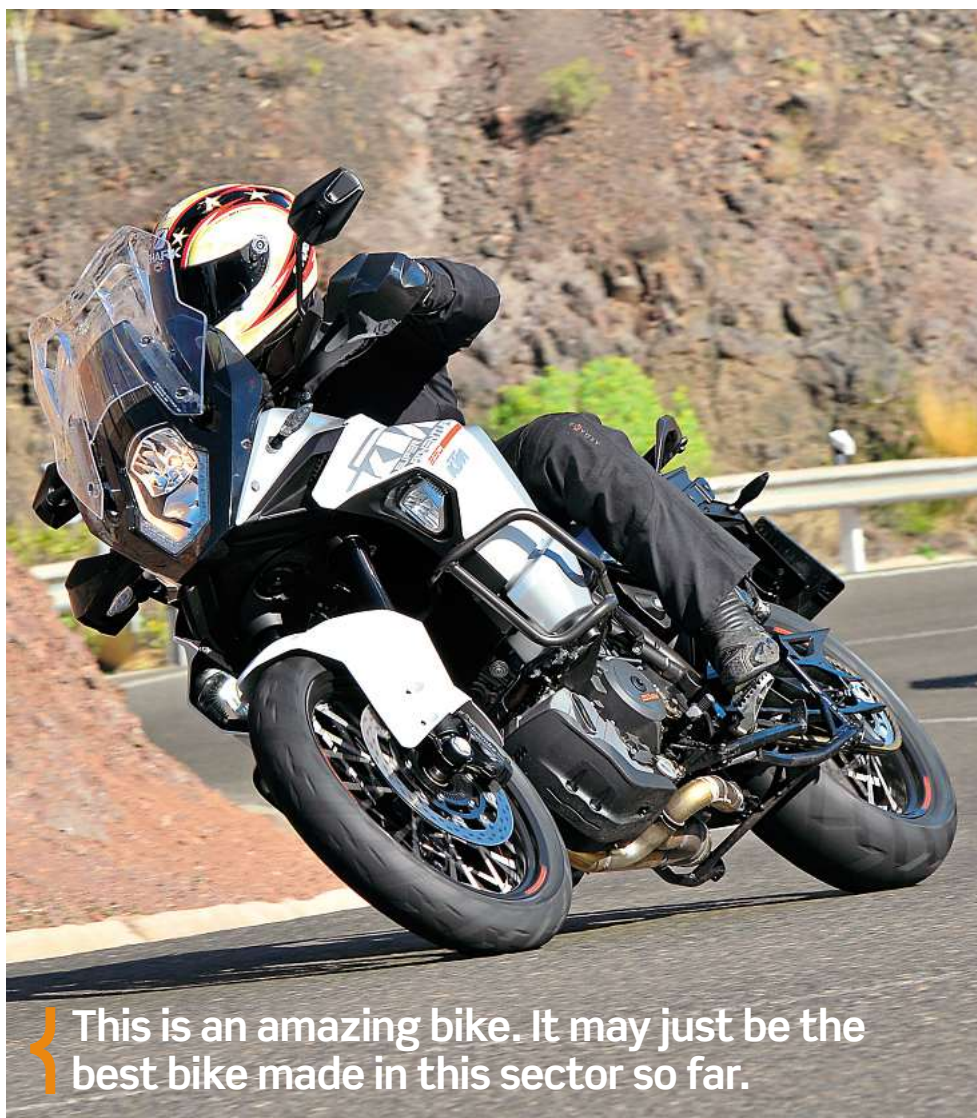
**Seat height:** 860/875mm

**Tank capacity:** 30 litres/4 litres reserve

**Dry weight:** 229kg

**Wet weight (fully fuelled):** 249kg

**Maximum gross weight:** 460kg



This is an amazing bike. It may just be the best bike made in this sector so far.

uncomfortable because it's not, but as far as seats go on this sort of bike, it's a lightyear away from the wonderful Triumph seats right now.

But really, that's it in terms of anything negative. The riding modes, that suspension and the whole way the bike can turn from luxurious, comfortable and easy-to-ride super tourer into a taught, responsive and just plain fun upright 160bhp superbike moves the game on a whole

new level. The 1290 even gave me a return of 35.3mpg on the day's often very, very quick and aggressive riding, which I was genuinely surprised about. Trust me, for testing a bike like this we ride hard and far and to see anything in the 30s wasn't expected, so a 35.3mpg figure is genuinely welcome.

Don't let the three letters on the tank put you off. Go ride this bike and you'll see that what we've got here is a real glimpse of the future. Predicted.

## HHC (aka Hill Hold Control... or getting going on a steep one)

The 1290 Super Adventure gets HHC – a system built into the bike that stops it from accidentally rolling backwards.

It works by using the bike's lean angle sensor to detect if the bike is on a slope.

After the rider releases the brake, the function automatically keeps the

brakes applied for a maximum of five seconds until the bike moves forward. If there's no pull away from the parked position within the five second period then the brake is released softly, to reactivate the system for another five seconds – just pull the brake lever again.

The system can be disabled.





## KTM 1050

# Fun times at orange high

Think simple, they said. Think of this as the simplest and best formula for dynamic, safe and reasonable travel, they said. Okay. Impress us old farts then, we said. And they did.

Last year it was this bike that was pretty much the biggest surprise of a lot of new models. Maybe that was because we were all looking the other way at louder, bigger, more shouty superbikes at the time – but KTM's 1050 Adventure wasn't expected. But boy does it make sense.

It's the baby-est of the big bike orange Adventure bunch. Based around the same motor as the other three from the Austrian stable, the 1050 has been built for a different type of rider than you might usually associate with the orange nutters of the

on- and off-road world (and I use the word nutters with a lot of affection... they are nutters).

So, the motor. The 75° V-twin has been taken down to 1055cc with a reduced bore and stroke of 103 x 63mm. The motor gets 50g lighter pistons than on the original, bigger motor and there's a new crankshaft with more rotating mass on the flywheel and rotor. What this all adds up to in terms of feel is an engine that really likes to rev up quickly from low down in the rev range.

In standard trim the lump kicks out 95bhp with 79lb-ft of torque and there is a 35kW (48bhp) mapping version available to suit new licence holders, too.

Actually, one of the biggest selling points about the 1050 is that it matches the 1190 in torque and power output up to 6000rpm. From there it does drop off a cliff so you've got to either be precise and ready with the gear changes to keep the advance going or you'll just spend time bouncing off the limiter.

Agility is a main part of the 1050's assault on the newer rider too. Oh yes, it looks the part in terms of sort-of-big-and-a-bit-scary Adventure bike but after the first mile you know that this is uber-friendly-motorcycling.

The seat height is 10mm lower than the 1190's, the bike is 5kg lighter at 212kg and the bike runs smaller tyres





## ENGINE

The 75° V-twin motor is 1055cc with a reduced bore and stroke of 103 x 63mm. It gets a new piston which is 50g lighter, a new crankshaft with more rotating mass on the flywheel and rotor. 35kW mapping is available for new licence holders on the A2 banding.

## SEAT HEIGHT

The height is 10mm lower than the 1190.

## WEIGHT

At 212kg (without fuel) the 1050 is a full 5kg lighter than the 1190 it's based on.

## INDICATORS

Self-cancelling turn signals are new, they go off after 150m and 10 seconds of riding.



## REAR SHOCK

Has preload and rebound adjustment.

## REAR CHASSIS

The 1050 has an integrated luggage case rack moulded into the subframe.

## FOOTRESTS

Adjustable by + or - 10mm.

## SMALLER TYRES

The 1050 uses Metzler Tourance Next but the sizes are kept smaller to give the bike a lighter, more nimble feel. Front is 110/80 and the rear 150/70.

## TECHNICAL

ABS, Ride-by-wire and Traction Control are all standard.



too (110/80 and 150/70 Metzler Tourance Next as standard) to make it more nimble and agile. It's like all the scary bits of a modern big Adventure bike have been turned down a tad to let the newer rider just enjoy the ride and take in the tour.

To that end, the bike also gets wide bars with two handlebar clamp positions and adjustable footrests that can alter by 10mm.

Like the 1290 big brother, the 1050 also gets KTM's new self-cancelling indicators which reset after 150m and 10 seconds of riding – I've never been much of a fan of KTM's indicator stalks because for me they don't actually move enough to give me the satisfactory feel that they're in place, so the new self-sorting system is welcome. But better stalks next time, please.

There's the now-standard integrated

luggage rack in the bike's subframe and the rear shock has rebound and preload adjustment.

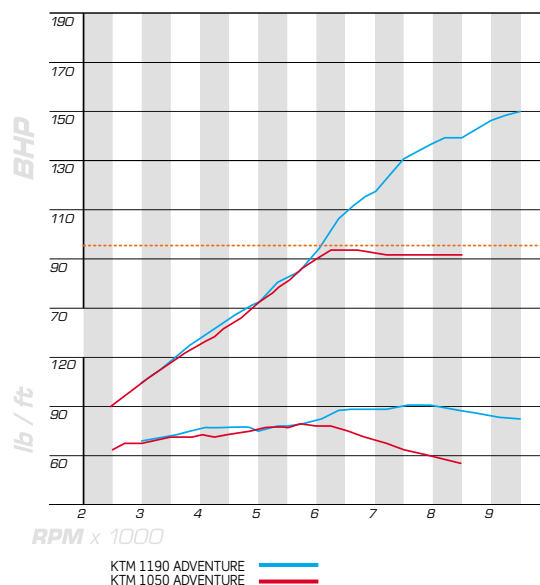
In terms of tech there's certainly enough for this sector at the moment. The 1050 comes with ABS, Ride-by-Wire and three-stage Traction Control. All the same system as used on the 1190 Adventure. It'll keep you out of trouble for a while, even if you're a bit ham-fisted with the very light-action and simply superb throttle.

Riding the bike is an odd mix of modern and old school. All of it good. The tech chirps and whirs away undetectable as you ride and from the stop to 6000rpm this is a peach of a motor. Lots of crisp acceleration and enough left over to cruise along at motorway speeds effortlessly.

But it's the handling where the 1050 really scores highly. It's inspired to put



## 1050 KTM ADVENTURE



smaller tyres and drop the weight on this bike because you feel every bump and bobble as you ride. It's lovely and inviting and involving. Hit the brakes hard and that terrific initial bite and dive from the forks is planted and predictable. Comfort overall is as good as anything on the market.

In terms of competition, the 1050 Adventure's nearest rival is something like the Triumph Tiger 105 but in reality the Brit option gets knocked into a cocked hat. This bike is lighter in feel, snappier in fun and able to cruise with panache.

Just two downsides for me. One small, one not so small. The unpainted subframe looks a bit low-rent and really should be powder-coated in my opinion and then there's the price. £11,000 feels like a spicy meatball for a



bike that is aimed at the newer or less-experienced rider (or an older rider who doesn't want 160bhp, no matter how usable it is).

In this marketplace, where you can get the new Tiger 800XCx for a shade under £10k the KTM has a real fight on its hands to win the buyer. Stand the bike alone and ride it and you'll love it, time will tell if the price puts many off.

## Specification

## KTM 1050 ADVENTURE - £10,999

**Engine:** 2-cylinder, 4-stroke, 75° V-twin

**Displacement:** 1050cc

**Bore/stroke:** 103 x 63mm

**Power:** 95bhp @ 6200rpm

**Torque:** 79lb-ft @ 5750rpm

**Compression ratio:** 13.0:1

**Transmission:** Six gears

**Fuel system:** Keihin EFI (throttle body 52mm)

**Cooling:** Liquid

**Clutch:** PASC slipper clutch, hydraulically operated

**Engine management/ignition:** Keihin EMS with Ride-By-Wire, double ignition

**Traction control:** TC (3-mode, disengageable, off-road mode option)

**Frame:** Chromium-molybdenum-steel trellis frame, powder coated

**Subframe:** Aluminium

**Handlebar:** Aluminium tapered 28/22mm

**Front suspension:** WP-USD 43mm

**Rear suspension:** WP-Monoshock

**Front brake:** 2x Brembo four piston, radially mounted caliper on a 320mm brake disc

**Rear brake:** Brembo two-piston, fixed caliper on a 267mm brake disc

**ABS:** Bosch 9M+ two channel (disengageable, off-road mode option)

**Front wheel:** Cast aluminium, 3 x 19in

**Rear wheel:** Cast aluminium, 4.5 x 17in

**Front tyre:** 110/80 x 19

**Rear tyre:** 150/70 R17

**Steering head angle:** 64°

**Trail:** 120mm

**Wheelbase:** 1560mm (+ or - 15mm)

**Ground clearance:** 220mm

**Seat height:** 850mm

**Tank capacity:** 23 litres / 3.5 litres reserve

**Dry weight:** 212kg

**Wet weight (fully fuelled):** 230kg

**Maximum gross weight:** 440kg





## WARNING

- » Always ride carefully and observe the applicable road traffic regulations
- » Always wear appropriate protective clothing and never ride without a helmet
- » All illustrated riding scenes were performed without exception by professionals on closed roads

» MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO EMULATE THE RIDING SCENES SHOWN

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Yamaha 2015 XJR1300

# YARD BUILT AND FUNKY

Yard Built: inspired by specials builders to look more 'urban' than usual, to get its spirit back... And then some.

WORDS: Tony Carter  
PHOTOGRAPHY: Yamaha

**B**andwagons bother me. Trends too. They bother me because there's nothing particularly organic about them. Few, if any, bandwagons have ever been unsolicited or just 'happened'. There's often a hand at the tiller, steering these 'happenings' into the public consciousness. Being very clever at manipulating the masses into wanting whatever it is at the centre of the maelstrom.

Furbies, big beards, One Direction... doesn't matter which. And so to the world of motorcycles and the trend for the retro superbike. Big machines from the 70s and 80s with bouncy suspension and spongy brakes. Lots of aggressive big power delivery and little in the way of either flim or flam to spoil the vibration-laced view of the horizon speeding towards you.

This a popular trend right now. And it's easy to see why. Riding those type of bikes back then was without

much charm or appreciation simply because there was nothing better as an alternative. This is what you rode if you wanted to go fast and that was it. Today though we have that hindsight, the ability to have some appreciation for the innate charm of those old bikes because there are many, many bikes that have better handling, brakes, manners, tech and speed than the old stuff from a few decades back.

So we see the old stuff for what it is – real, involved fun at a slower pace all-round than the ultra modern options out on the road now.

And it's here where the problem can lie with this sort of modern offering, the type of thing where there's a corporate hand on the tiller steering a modern version of a bike that should really only ever be about being authentic and real. Imagine you're the





# First Rides



**Yamaha saves you the time and effort of having some bearded trendy fella take your XJR to bits and charge a fortune to customise it, by doing the job for you.**

designer of a new retro superbike roadster. How much new suspension do you put on the bike? Too much and you lose that old-school charm, too little and the bike's a pogoing mess over the bumps and overbanding. Then there's the motor, do you smooth out power delivery with finely tuned fuel injection or leave some lumpiness to give the motorcycle a bit of 'character'? Brakes like the bike's been run into a brick wall or little-feedback sponginess? You get the idea.

It's authenticity that we want on our bikes. An authentic cruiser is fine, as is an authentic scooter, trail bike, anything. Authentic will find the audience it deserves for no other reason than it's the real deal. And folks will always like the real deal, they appreciate the honesty. So for Yamaha to revisit the XJR in its 20th year and give the venerable air-cooled motor a revamp that ties in with the trend for funky customs seemed like a no-brainer.

It seemed that way because in the XJR, Yamaha has a bike that epitomises and genuinely does come from the

latter part of the era which the 'retro modern customs' trend is chasing. This truly is an authentic motorcycle. And if Yamaha gets it right, knows when to stop the twiddling and the fiddling, then it'll hit on one corkscrew of a machine.

So now we've established the marketplace and the wants of the buyer, to an extent, let's say what's different about the new XJR1300 in comparison to the old version. Well, the changes to the bike are effectively cosmetic. There's a slimmer petrol tank, a new solo seat option, funky side-covers where numberplates would go, new handlebars with three different options of bend, the blacked-out 4-2-1 exhaust and other tweaks for looks here and there. There are also two versions of the new XJR available; the standard and Café Racer. The Café Racer gets a host of parts to change riding position and looks.

A host of other features remain the same as the 1999 model, from the five-speed constant mesh transmission, 298mm dual disc front brakes and single 267mm rear to the double cradle steel frame and telescopic fork.



## The XJR Racer version

There's two versions of the new XJR1300, the standard and the 'Racer'.

The Racer costs £9599 compared to the £8599 of the standard – for that extra cash you get racing-style clip-on handlebars, carbon café racer style cowling and solo style seat with carbon bodywork.

The regular version will be available in three colours: power blue, matt grey and midnight black, while the Racer only comes in midnight black with the unpainted carbon fibre add-ons.



## THE RIDING BIT

During the world launch of the XJR, I rode both the standard and the café racer versions of the bike and it's amazing how different a bike can feel with just fairly rudimentary changes to riding position.

The Café Racer pitches you much more forward and prone on the bike, thanks to the clip-on handlebars. While the riding position looks great (arguably it's THE rider silhouette for this type of bike) it puts too much weight on your wrists. The knockback being that your hands and wrists get increasingly tired and become prone to things like vibration – there's a fair bit on the XJR at low to midrange revs as you make your way through town traffic at peak times.

I could manage about an hour on the bike before the odd shake of the arm came along to negate the numb wrist action. The prone position keeps you out of any windblast at higher speeds but there's a problem with the very-custom-café cut-down fairing if you decide to really wind the 1300 on and want to tuck in on the bike.







“We were inspired by the design of the 70s and 80s, with simple, pure shapes and authentic materials”

**It's a muscle bike, so muscle it. For a big lump, the XJR has always been capable in the corners, but you need to be committed.**

Getting really low on the XJR is easy but the café racer fairing is too full of fittings so you can't actually see in front of you. The answer is to hover your head about five inches over the tank when properly tucked in. But it couldn't have been too hard to sort this issue out in the early stages of design. Mind you, I'm not entirely sure if any owner of this bike would want to ride like that anyway, the fairing is more about taking some of the windblast away at motorway speeds than going flat out.

On both versions of the bike, the seat is terrific. Its narrowed-down profile and good support make the XJR

a doddle to paddle around at standstill and the set-up really lets you get hunkered-in to the bike in the corners. It's a treat.

The suspension can feel a touch crude at times – cranked over in fourth gear for a long series of sweeping corners saw ripples and bumps in the road that the suspension was struggling with a bit, but the bike's overall chassis is so well-refined that it shrugged off the pogoing front end and just rode through the issue straight and true.

As far as the chassis goes, it's great. The XJR actually feels like it should be a wallowy old Hector into the corners because on the straight bits of road there's an inherent easiness to the ride – like it has a monstrously long wheelbase or something. But get into the twisties and the bike's character really comes through. The previously muted new exhaust goes from obedient puppy to angry lion snarl at the click of a finger and the XJR is terrific to turn in pretty hard while still hitting the brakes. It'll stick to the line easily, it's a very forgiving machine.

There's no ABS for the brakes, which might worry the newer rider who is used to such affordable things on virtually every bike these days, but if, like me, you're of a certain age where you grew up – literally – on bikes with decent brakes bereft of modern trickery like ABS then these brakes will be a welcome return. There's plenty of feedback and feel from the stoppers and locking them

## The XJR story - a potted history

The XJR1200 arrived in 1995 borrowing its motor from the FJ1200 sports tourer. There was also a souped-up SP version in beautiful Yamaha France colours. In 1999 the capacity went up to 1250cc and the badge read XJR1300.

In addition to the bigger motor, the XJR also got a reinforced chassis and better brakes. It pretty much stayed exactly where it was in terms of development until 2005 when the then new, EU-2 regulations forced a change to the exhaust.

In 2007 there was more development with fuel injection and better engine management. The bike also got higher-spec Öhlins rear shocks and a tweak or two to the cosmetics helped keep things looking fresh, which included new LED tail-lights. And that's pretty much been it until this, latest version of the XJR1300 which although it uses an old air-cooled engine has once again come in for some work with the stylists.





## Stephane Zache, designer

"In terms of style, we were inspired by the design of the late 70s and 80s, with simple and pure shapes and authentic materials.

"The DNA is also racing inspired. Long and narrow tank, dynamic seat, race numberplate with intakes... and we thought a lot about the customising. This XJR is an easy base to pimp!

"The tank shape is unique and iconic, with the tank bottom line cut by the frame to create the narrowest possible knee grip. This helps the handling, and also you can see the engine underneath you, which is pretty special nowadays.

"In general, we removed plastic parts as much as possible. The rear frame and the tail of the bike is much smaller and shorter. The racy side-covers are aluminium and much narrower, the headlight is more compact. We paid a lot of attention to details like the headlight stay which is a nicely fabricated and technical piece. On a motorcycle, such small items make all the difference.

"For me, the XJR belongs to the Vintage Superbike scene from the 80s and we developed the first sketches in that direction. It is actually closer to an 80s superbike than to a 60s café racer."

## Specification

### YAMAHA XJR1300

**Price:** £8599  
(Café Racer £9599)

**Engine:** Four-stroke, air-cooled, four valves, dohc, forward-inclined parallel four cylinder

**Dimensions:**  
79 x 63.8mm

**Capacity:** 1251cc

**Output:** 98bhp at 8000rpm

**Torque:** 80ft-lb at 6000rpm

**Compression ratio:** 9.7:1

**Fuel system:** Electronic fuel injection

**Transmission:** Six-speed with chain final drive

**Clutch:** Wet, multiple disc, multiple-disc coil spring

**Frame:** Steel double cradle

**Suspension:** (F) 38mm telescopic fork with 130mm of travel. (R) swingarm with double Öhlins shock

**Castor angle:** 25°

**Wheelbase:** 1500mm

**Wet weight:** 240kg with oil/water and fuel

**Brakes:** (F) 2 x 298mm disc with two, two-piston calipers. (R) 1 x 267mm disc with two-piston caliper

**Tyres:** (F) 120/70 ZR17. (R) 180/55 ZR17

**Seat height:** 829mm

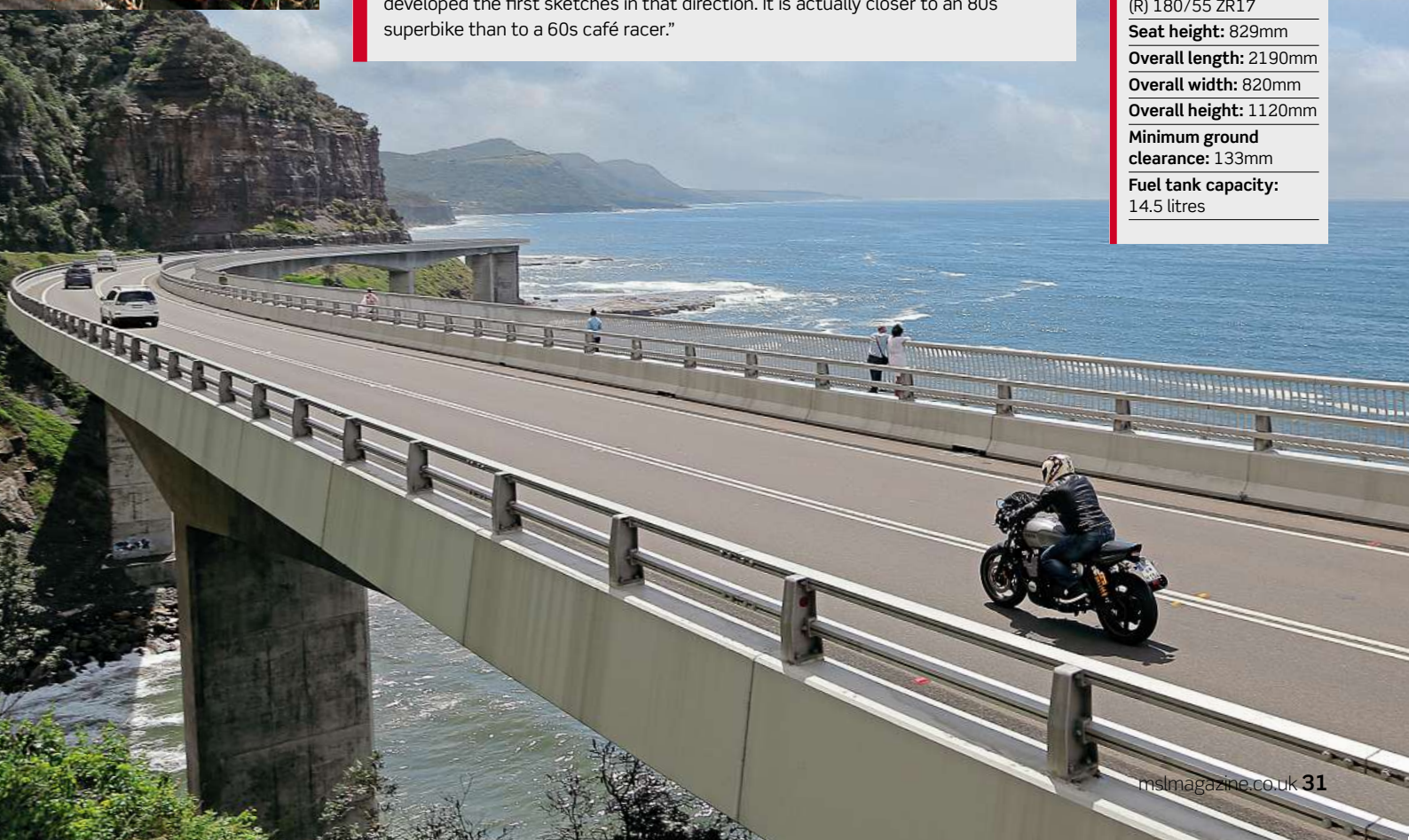
**Overall length:** 2190mm

**Overall width:** 820mm

**Overall height:** 1120mm

**Minimum ground clearance:** 133mm

**Fuel tank capacity:** 14.5 litres





## Closest rival



### HONDA CB1100EX - £10,299

It's a retro styled bike with more refinement about it than the Yamaha, but it also costs more dosh to buy in the first place.

Weighing in at a pretty hefty 260kg wet weight and making just 88.5bhp at 7500rpm the Honda struggles against the Yamaha in this sector – but it does have very loyal fans who won't have a word said against their favourite. Where it lacks in sheer force however, the Honda makes up for with loads of charm. This is the David Niven of the motorcycle world, dressed in a particularly refined way, offering advice and warmth.

The CB is very neutral to ride, comfortable enough and actually quite fun on the move. But at £700 more than the café racer version of the Yamaha over here, you'll have to be really wanting the Honda retro-vision to justify it.

up is incredibly easy for the ham-fisted, for the rest of us what this means is that you can really use front and back brakes as you want. Lock 'em, don't lock 'em – lift the back wheel off the floor, all stable and under as much control as you can muster, mister.

There's some nice touches to the dash on this model too, the two analogue dials tell you speed and revs, there's a small digital screen with fuel and temp information on it and other than the usual run of idiot lights that's about it. Keeping it simple without even a gear indicator to worry about, but then who of a certain age really needs a gear indicator these days?

As you would expect from this air-cooled engine, a lot of heat comes off the cylinders, so much so that during fairly low temperatures and soaking rain I used the warmth from the motor to warm my hands for a few seconds during stops at junctions. On a hot day you can't feel the engine heat while on the move but once you stop it is instantly there to remind you of the type of motor and cooling system you're working hard.

Pillions get a cursory nod with a fairly small seat and quite a big leg bend to the footrests. Big miles on an XJR two-up will not be the sort of thing you're likely to end up doing.

But one thing that you will end up doing a lot is filling up. At just 14 litres (down from the previous bike's 21) the tank looks a real proper part of the retro scene because it's small and slim... but 14 litres really isn't anywhere near enough for this type of bike and I'm sure that owners will quickly become frustrated at the frequency of petrol stops too.

On the subject of feeding the motor, the XJR's fuelling

### EXHAUST

The black matt exhaust pipes of the 4-2-1 Akrapovic system are a nice cosmetic touch to the bike, very 'of the period' and sound very meaty when the big bike is hard on the gas.

### SIZE AND SEAT

The seat is well sculpted with a serious amount of bum-stop for the rider, however pillions aren't exactly treated to the lap of luxury on the XJR. The seat is just 829mm high so there's not much of an issue in paddling the bike about, even though it tips the scales at 240kg wet.



### WHEELS

Cast, three-spoke wheels ape the mid-1980s superbike look the bike was designed to mimic. The 17in have a 180/55 tyre at the back and 120/70 in the front.



Traction control? No. ABS? No. Anti-wheelie control? Er, no. Big fun? Oh yes.





#### FUEL TANK

The 14 litre fuel tank is small for an old-school air-cooled, thirsty motor. Expect about 100 miles per tank.

#### CHASSIS

Beautifully styled, the frame is a very retro-looking steel double cradle item and there's a real charm to the conventional 38mm forks in the front and twin Öhlins rear shocks. The forks seem underdamped though, on my last ride out on that bike it rode a series of bumps so roughly that I had to roll off.

#### ENGINE

The motor is the familiar 1250cc inline four-cylinder dohc unit that kicks out 98bhp at 8000rpm and makes 80lb-ft at 6000rpm. The power starts to kick in at 4000rpm really (certainly don't let it drop below that and rely on torque to pull you clear) and runs smoothly up to 10,000rpm.

#### BRAKES

Up front there's double 298mm discs with two-piston calipers. At the back is a single 267mm disc with a single two-piston caliper. The brakes are a joy, delivering instant grip in a usable way.

## Oliver Grill, product planning manager

"Vintage and retro is all around us now, and car and motorbike makers bring new models to follow that trend, but with the XJR we have a real authentic bike that has remained in production all the time. With its big air-cooled engine it gained a large and loyal fan group.

"I ride one myself, I love this big block engine. And nowadays, we see more and more people interested in this simple and pure design. The XJR is one of the last remaining air-cooled four-cylinders.

"Our designers had one main goal: to expose this mighty engine as much as possible. And we stuck to masculine proportions as well: the XJR is truly 'a man's bike'!

"By the simplicity of the construction, the XJR

is great for customising. We offer many accessories for it already... and one special area for us was the riding position. We do an option of three different handlebar styles (a high and wide handlebar, close to the rider, a sporty, straight fat-bar which is wide and forces you to lean into the bike and clip-ons) we offer three very different positions. Each with a very different riding attitude on the bike.

"The XJR has this unique combination of an air-cooled engine backed up by modern components like the fuel injection, the suspension, the chassis. It has this classic, torquey, silky smooth, big air-cooled engine while it rides like a modern bike. There is nothing superficial about it. This is a bike with real character."

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## Timeline

- **1999:** The XJR goes from 1200 to 1300. It gets a bigger-bore engine (1188 to 1251cc) and a reinforced, stiffer chassis as well. Handling is improved by uprated forks with revised damping and preload adjusters and a narrower front tyre (from 130 to 120). A wider rear tyre (180) and R1 style front brakes are added and internally the motor gets chrome-composite plated aluminium cylinders, forged pistons and a more compact drive chain. Some cosmetic changes too and the standard version comes in black and dark green, the SP version gets two paint schemes: 'Yamaha Racing France' blue and black/red/white 'AMA American Racing'.
- **2001:** Just new colours and graphics for the SP version: new blue/black and yellow/white/black combinations.
- **2002:** A new 4-2-1 exhaust system, with single instead of dual silencers, and new carburettors, reduce weight by 6kg. A lighter rear wheel, lighter swingarm assembly, a hollow rear axle and a more compact rear brake caliper. An air induction system is added to comply with EU-1 emission regulations. Fuel tank, seat and sidecovers are redesigned to give the bike a slimmer mid-section and offer a narrower knee grip. The riding position is moved slightly forward for better handling. Öhlins now come as standard. Previous 'special' colours (with graphics) are now also standard.
- **2003:** New graphics and three base colours: black, blue/black and yellow/black. The yellow colour features a black engine, the other colours a silver engine.
- **2004:** New wheels and front discs are lighter than before, and the suspension settings are stiffer. New catalyser for EU-2 regulations and an immobiliser system (with chip coded ignition key) is now standard equipment.
- **2005:** New blue colour with a bold centre stripe on the fuel tank. Black colour is continued without graphics.
- **2006:** Blue and black colours are continued.
- **2007:** Fuel injection system arrives as does new engine ECU. The exhaust system is new and gets an EXUP valve and three-way catalyser to meet EU-3 regulations. The part under the engine has a stainless steel finish instead of the black paint of the previous models. Öhlins shocks have easy-adjust preload set-up. The instruments are slightly changed and clear flasher lenses and oval mirrors come standard. The dual, round LED tail-lights first appear in this year. Colours are black and a new power blue.
- **2008:** A new white colour is introduced while the black colour gets a new graphic on the tank.
- **2009:** The black colour is continued while silver tech, with a very special graphic on the tank, is new.
- **2010:** Black and silver tech colours are continued.
- **2011:** A black version is introduced. The model gets a black swingarm and black front fork for the first time.
- **2012:** The black colour combination is continued.
- **2013:** A new silver is introduced with special numberplate graphic on the fuel tank. A basic black colour, without graphics, is also new. The black engine and front fork remain, but the swingarm is now aluminium colour, and the rim around the headlight is changed to black.
- **2014:** The black colour is continued while a special matt grey is introduced.

2001



2009



is basically unchanged since the last upgrade in 2007, it's still as smooth as silk and makes power from low-down to 10,000rpm but be aware that the torque curve on this bike doesn't really get going until about 4000rpm. Drop below that (in a higher gear on a switchback mountain bend, for example) and the XJR will just fart and burble into trouble. You still need to stir the gearbox on this bike to get it to hustle along. For me, that's part of the pleasure of riding it.

After the Yamaha Tracer launch last year I said that it felt like Yamaha had its mojo back. That it was making motorcycles again that needed a rider to ride them. Yamaha used to be about being good at lots of things but being best at complementing the rider's style and skill. And that stands true with the XJR. It's a bike that has the look, the real heritage and the style. It's got presence and attitude when needed. But it all counts for nothing unless there's a pretty switched on rider on its back hustling. Get that and the XJR cannot only walk the trendy line of fashion with the most cred of any of them out there but it also puts its superbike tracksuit on and goes a few rounds on a Sunday morning. And that's a pretty rare thing, these days.





**MT-09  
TRACER**

*Test ride the new MT-09 Tracer now at your local Yamaha dealer*

The new MT-09 Tracer has arrived and your authorised Yamaha dealer has a demonstrator just waiting for you. The bike press are calling this 'the best MT yet' and considering the MT-07 was voted Bike of the Year 2014 by MCN that's a pretty bold statement. Utilising the acclaimed three cylinder, 849cc engine and aluminium frame of the MT-09 the new Tracer is the first faired MT. With a new riding position, larger pillion, adjustable screen, traction control, 18ltr fuel tank and twin LED headlights this MT has the ability to cover long distances but still has the soul and excitement that has now become synonymous with the MT name.

**Welcome to the Dark Side of Japan.**



#### Representative Example

Cash Price	Deposit or Part Exchange	Total Amount of Credit	Agreement Duration	Credit Facility Fee <sup>†</sup>	Purchase Fee <sup>†</sup>	Initial Repayment of	35 Repayments of	Final Repayment of	Total Amount Payable	Interest Rate (Fixed)	Representative APR
£8,284.00	£1,639.50	£6,644.50	37 Months	£230.00	£10.00	£175.00	£125.00	£3,528.00	£9,717.50	7.49%	9.5% APR

Finance example based on an annual mileage of 6000. <sup>†</sup>Included in monthly repayments.

[www.yamaha-motor.co.uk](http://www.yamaha-motor.co.uk)

**RAC**

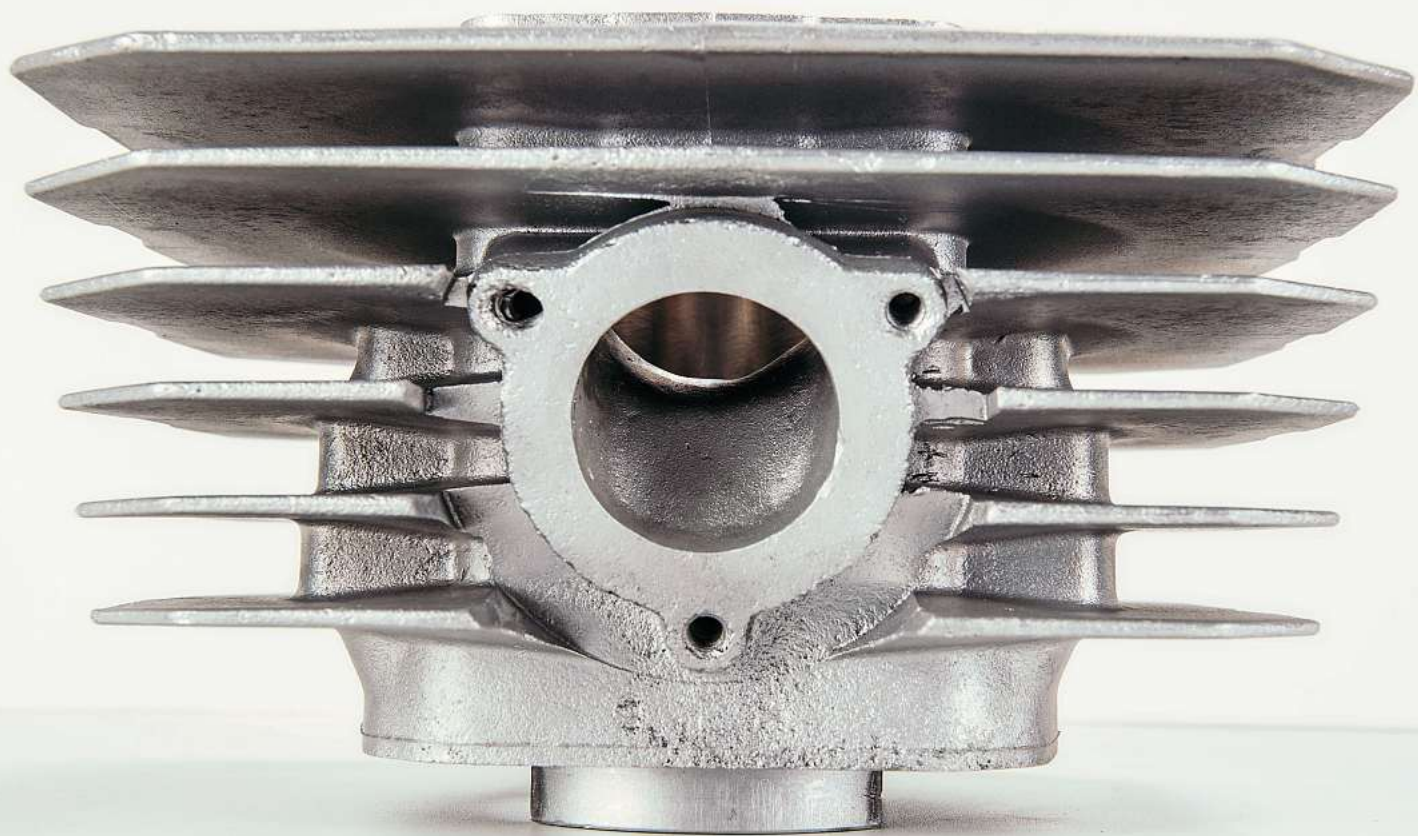
Finance is subject to status and is only available to UK applicants aged 18 and over. MiYamaha Personal Contract Purchase is only available through Yamaha Finance which is a trading style of Black Horse Ltd., St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff CF10 5BH. This finance offer ends 16th March 2015. \*Your regular monthly repayments are low because it is the nature of a PCP product that a significant proportion of the total amount payable is payable at the end of the contract by one large final repayment. \*\*Subject to payment of outstanding finance; new finance agreements are subject to status. \*\*\*If the motorcycle is in good condition and has not exceeded the allowed mileage you will have nothing further to pay. If the motorcycle has exceeded the allowed mileage a charge for excess mileage will apply.

**YAMAHA***Revs Your Heart*



# AIR HEADS

## THE END OF AN ERA



Air-cooling has been fundamental in motorcycle engines since day one.  
But its future is perhaps far bleaker than you might think.

**WORDS:** Bruce Wilson **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Mortons Archive





In 1897, the De Dion-Bouton motor-tricycle was born. It featured the most advanced small-capacity engine of its time and is believed by many to be the foundation from which motorcycle motors have evolved. It revved higher than most, produced more power than its rivals and boasted perhaps the most developed air-cooled technology of its age.

From day one in the world of motorcycling, air cooling was considered the norm, despite primitive examples of liquid cooling being present in the industrial world before the turn of the 20th century. The reasoning was two fold; the challenge of downsizing liquid-cooling systems to suit small scale engines was significant, and the relatively low power outputs of early motorcycle engines simply didn't necessitate such advanced cooling. Of course, there were exceptions.

Following suit with the aviation world, which pioneered liquid-cooled technology in the 1915 Hispano-Suiza V-twin motor, some motorcycle manufacturers turned their attentions towards this new direction. Perhaps the most celebrated example of an early period water-cooled motorcycle is the Scott Flying Squirrel. Developed in the early 1920s, the 596cc two-stroke powered machine made its showroom debut in 1926 and featured a unique water-cooled convection method known as the thermosyphon system.

For its time it was extremely advanced and this was reflected in the model's sporting success, its 34bhp motor powering it to third place in the 1929 Isle of Man TT. But for all its achievements, it was still regarded as both overly priced and too complicated. Air-cooled motors were far more affordable, lighter and generally more popular owing to their simplicity. And so things would mostly remain until the 1980s.

**ABOVE:** The Montgomery's Bradshaw engine featured a unique air/oil cooling system. The pioneering technology was well ahead of its time when released in the early 1920s.

## HOW AIR COOLING WORKS

In theory, every single motor is air-cooled. But some engines exaggerate this natural cooling process by fitting protruding fins to the outside of an engine's cylinder and head. The main reason for doing so is to increase the surface area of the metal in contact with the cooling air, which in turn increases the rate of heat exchange. A simple way to appreciate the value of surface area is to picture a tea cup on a saucer. If you were to pour tea on to the saucer it would cool down much faster than the tea within the cup, because more air is able to get to the broader-surfaced saucer. It's really that simple.

This being the case, throughout the decades, manufacturers have developed many different designs, shapes and thicknesses of fins in hope of bettering air cooling, which in turn allows a motor to run more consistently and more efficiently. It seems logical that the optimum design would see cylinder fins inches deep and super thin, so you can get as many on to the cylinder's walls as possible. But this approach would normally encourage fin failures owing to extreme vibration, impact from road debris or even the severe forces of wind pressure at high speeds.

The latter influence in some cases is forced on motors. By channelling air directly on to fins a motor is being subjected to far more air than it would otherwise see, especially if it's hidden behind a frame or shroud. But perhaps the best influence to encourage greater cooling is to consider the cylinder configuration. A horizontally opposed twin, for example, means not only do cylinders protrude widthways into the cooling air, but the cylinders are far enough apart to prevent conduction heating from one cylinder to the next. Not a bad solution for those who built twin-cylinder engines.





Scott's 1928 water-cooled two-stroke twin-cylinder engine was unlike anything else of its time.

## WHY AIR COOLING IS POPULAR

There are loads of advantages to air-cooled motors. For a start they can be much lighter than a liquid-cooled-type. There is no need for a radiator, to lug around several litres of additional water or to house a heavy water pump and fan. From a design perspective, an engine can be simpler to produce and much more affordable to make.

Some people also find them much easier on the eye and the noise is less silenced – owing to the lack of a water jacket – so air-cooled motors give off a much more rugged sound. Nowadays we see air-cooled engines as nostalgic and somewhat rebellious in their nature. There's no doubt the design's been superseded by the efficiency and practical values of water cooling, but sometimes going against the grain and having something a little different can seem like a good idea.

## THE END OF AIR-COOLED

In more recent years we've seen a severe decline in the number of large capacity motorcycles sporting air-cooled cylinders and heads. The main reason for this, is tighter emissions legislation. Manufacturers are forced to produce motorcycles which adhere to tighter, cleaner rulings; especially in Europe.

We're now governed by the Euro 3 directive, which aims to ensure reduced hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter in exhaust gases. Motorcycles are having to become cleaner and greener, which is why you'll have noted bigger and more sophisticated exhausts on bikes, as well as fewer air-cooled engines being made. By 2017, new bikes will be subjected to the Euro 4 legislation, which sees current values of permissible NOx drop from 0.15g/km to just 0.07g/km. Fast forward to 2020 and Euro 5 legislation will mean it's hugely unlikely manufacturers will be able to produce large capacity, pure air-cooled engines – the emissions legislation will be too tight.

The problem with air-cooled motors is their very broad operating heat range. An air-cooled bike in traffic is going to get very hot. Once it's moving again it'll cool down, causing the engine's components, which had expanded owing to excessive heat, to now contract. Manufacturers have to allow sufficient tolerance within a

motor to accommodate the resizing of its internals. This often means motors aren't as tight as they could be, so oil is more prone to making it into the combustion chamber where it's burnt, increasing the level of pollutant emissions pumped into the atmosphere.

On a water-cooled motor, thanks to thermostats, radiators and fans, it's far easier to keep a narrower heat range, ensuring tighter tolerances and less oil being burnt. So water-cooled is the 'cleaner' option. Some manufacturers, such as Harley and BMW, have tried to keep air-cooled units using water assistance. The R1200GS was remodelled in 2013 with specific water tracts in its cylinders – and a fan and radiators – to aid the otherwise still air-cooled, finned cylinders.

By definition, it is now water-cooled, but the German brand is still keen to describe the bike as air/liquid-cooled. Harley-Davidson followed suit with its latest Ultra model sporting water-cooled assistance, to what it still regards as an air-cooled motor. Many other brands have just accepted the constraints of air cooling and moved more willingly with the times. One of the biggest limitations of air cooling is its inability to dissipate heat from the engine. In 1984, Kawasaki stunned the world by releasing the GPz900; the world's first liquid-cooled, inline-four mass production sports bike. It was a technological revolution that marked the start of a new wave of performance motors, which would not only prove increased reliability – thanks to more consistent running temperatures – but would also allow manufacturers to aim for bigger performance figures. Most contemporary 600cc and above motorcycles produce at least 100bhp.

Some of the latest litre-bikes are nearly pumping out an unbelievable 200bhp straight from the showroom. If you were to take such a bike, remove its water cooling, fans and such like, it would simply overheat. Fin cooling just isn't up to scratch for high-performance engine demands. At the moment bikes such as Yamaha's new XJR are managing to escape the inevitable but with even more stringent legislation on the way, it's likely to mean curtains for one of the longest running air-cooled motors in motorcycling history. And that's something we will miss.



## AIR-COOLED ENGINEERING: not as easy as you might think...

When it comes to designing and building things, hard earned engineering skills can often be forgotten and lost.

The large project leader on Honda's CB1100, Hirofumi Fukunaga, admitted that producing a contemporary air-cooled engine for the retro-styled bike was no walk in the park: "It was harder than we anticipated, but only because we were adamant on the motor looking perfect. For example, we wanted the fins to be 2mm

thick, which presented a real challenge. Initially, we were struggling to achieve a good enough quality finish on the very edges of the fins, because the alloy was cooling too quickly.

"This led to a rethink and the use of injection moulding the fins.

"Styling the fins also took a bit of thinking, as we needed them to fulfil their purpose of best dispersing heat, while looking the part. In the past there would

have been the skills needed to manage this task with ease, but those skills were lost when we moved away from air-cooled motors in favour of liquid-cooled types.

"Because the skills weren't practiced they were soon forgotten.

"The CB1100 project was an enjoyable opportunity to re-educate ourselves on the challenges faced when building an air-cooled engine. We're very satisfied with our end results."



Honda's CB1100 air-cooled motor proved a sincere challenge for the factory to produce.



2015 Yamaha R1

# SUPERBIKES REDEFINED

A bike built to move the superbike genre on with tech, tech and more tech. But also a bit of a pussycat if you don't want to wring its neck.

WORDS: Tony Carter  
PHOTOGRAPHY: Yamaha



**B**efore we get into telling you my first riding impressions of the all-new Yamaha R1 superbike fresh from the track, we should explain that this is a mere two page report. Sent in to *MSL*

Towers at the 11th hour, the bike sounds so good that we simply had to get something of the new R1 into this issue of *MSL*. Space is so tight with all the launch action at the moment though, that we will cover all the technical aspects of the new superbike in full detail next month.

In the meantime, here's the first outpouring of post-test euphoria from the editor who travelled to Australia to put the big bike to the test:

"This bike is a paramount shift for Yamaha. For years the tuning fork brigade has been playing tech catch-up with its rivals but from this moment on they've gained the upper hand in the fiercely competitive Superbike sector.

"There aren't any individual areas of this motorcycle that stand out above the others.

The chassis is new and sublime, the 48mm semi-active forks and the rear shock absorber give loads of feedback to the rider.

"On the move it's the riding position itself which is a major part of the overall achievement. Roomy, yet still being intimate with the bike, the pushed-forward clip ons are ideal for tucking in under the very effective screen as well as getting big leverage into and out of tight corners.

"There's a plethora of tech bits and pieces such as adjusting the severity of the throttle delivery, traction control and various other settings, that you could get lost in if you're the type of person who just dives in.

"Bridgestone has developed the tyres specifically to work on the R1 and they are superb. Arguably the best tyres on this sort of bike that I've ever ridden on. Using these tyres it was entirely possible to feel so confident that dragging an elbow on the track mid-corner was more than just a fantasy. This is the world of the modern, tech-packed racebike with special rubber... in your local Yamaha dealer.

"But ultimately this motorcycle is all

about the motor. The 998cc crossplane four-cylinder unit kicks out 200bhp and a huge 106.7lb-ft of torque. Driveable and tractable from 2000rpm, the motor just runs and runs with arm-wrenching torque all the way up to 12,000rpm.

"There was some talk at the world launch that this engine, in part, is equivalent to the 2007 MotoGP Yamaha engine – and I'd be inclined to agree. Pick up the pace out of the last corner and gun the bike to feel like Valentino Rossi as the anti-wheelie control chirps in, the electronic steering damper controls the flapping handlebars and the monstrously powerful motor fires you forward at eyeball-sapping speeds.

"It's a real evolution in motorcycling. This R1 feels like a racebike without the racebike harshness that would usually accompany it. You really could ride it down to the shops and back and still have what is clearly the nearest thing to a pukka MotoGP bike ever sold to the masses.

"Genuinely just like Valentino's. It's brilliant."





## Specification

### YAMAHA R1

**Price:** £14,999

**Engine:** Liquid-cooled, four-stroke, dohc, forward-inclined parallel four-cylinder, four valves

**Displacement:** 998cc

**Bore x stroke:** 79.0 x 50.9mm

**Compression ratio:** 13.0:1

**Maximum power:** 200bhp @ 13,500rpm

**Maximum torque:** 106.7lb-ft @ 11,500rpm

**Lubrication system:** Wet sump

**Clutch type:** Wet, multiple disc

**Fuel system:** Fuel injection

**Ignition system:** TCI (digital)

**Transmission system:** Constant mesh, six-speed

**Final transmission:** Chain

**Chassis**

**Frame:** Aluminium Deltabox

**Front suspension system:** 43mm Kayaba telescopic forks

**Front travel:** 120mm

**Caster angle:** 24°

**Trail:** 102mm

**Rear suspension:** Swingarm, (link suspension)

**Rear travel:** 120mm

**Front brake:** Hydraulic dual disc, 320mm with six-piston calipers

**Rear brake:** Hydraulic single disc, 220mm with single two-piston caliper

**Front tyre:** 120/70 ZR17M/C (58W)

**Rear tyre:** 190/55 ZR17M/C (75W)

**Dimensions**

**Overall length:** 2055mm

**Overall width:** 690mm

**Overall height:** 1150mm

**Seat height:** 855mm

**Wheelbase:** 1405mm

**Minimum ground clearance:** 130mm

**Wet weight (including full oil and fuel tank):** 199kg

**Fuel tank capacity:** 17 litres

'One-click' adjustable riding modes. New Thin Film Transistor (TFT) LCD instruments.

New short wheelbase aluminium Deltabox frame.

Six-axis IMU with Gyro/G sensors for 3D motion data. Banking sensitive Traction Control/Slide Control. Front Lift Control and Launch Control.

New 998cc 200bhp crossplane 4-cylinder engine.

Upward truss type swingarm/magnesium rear frame.

Banking sensitive Racing ABS/Unified Brake System.

Magnesium wheels and aluminium fuel tank.





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## Buffalo 2015 Range

There are some new additions to the Buffalo range for 2015, including touring jackets for men and women, mesh jackets and matching gloves. Prices for the textile jackets start at £79.99 and top out at £99.99, not bad if you're on a budget. Although we've not tested anything yet, we saw the range in the flesh at Expo, and they look pretty well put together for the price.

The Alpine touring jacket comes in men's and women's versions. The outer shell features Ripstop and reflective Scotchlite panels. Inside is CE armour and two linings, one waterproof and the other thermal. There's also a large back pocket. The men's version comes in black, black/stone and black/yellow, sizes small-5XL. The ladies has a flare zip over the hips and stretch panels under the arms for a comfortable and flattering fit. It comes in black and black/stone in sizes 8-22. Both versions are

**PRICE: £99.99**

The Blade commuting jacket is available in sizes S-12XL. Yep, that's right, 12XL. It's waterproof, has CE protectors at the shoulders and elbow, four external pockets and reflective detailing, and sells for

**PRICE: £79.99**

**CALL: 0117 971 9200**

**VISIT: [www.thekeycollection.co.uk](http://www.thekeycollection.co.uk)**



Coolflow ST is a three-layer vented jacket and jeans combo, with a fine mesh outer shell for the hot days and removable waterproof and thermal liners for the not so nice. The usual CE protection, abrasion resistance, adjusters, pockets etc. throughout. Available in black and stone/red, sizes S-5XL, the jacket is **£99.99** and the trousers **£79.99**.

The Radar short gloves are made to match. They're a leather/textile mix, with hard knuckles and grip panels on the palms, and cost

**PRICE: £29.99 a pair**

Proton sport gloves are made from full-grain leather, and have a hard knuckle and reinforced palm/little finger. They come in black and black/white and will set you back

**PRICE: £39.99**



## Weise Outlast Baltimore

Buffalo's sister company over at Fowlers, Weise, has added a new four-season textile to the range, boasting a liner made using Outlast.

Originally developed for NASA, Outlast absorbs, stores and releases heat, to help regulate the body's microclimate. The theory is, as you warm up, your body heat is absorbed, keeping you cool; then when you cool down, that heat is released, to keep you warm.

It's supposed to reduce temperature swings when riding in varying temperatures and conditions and stop you sweating, reducing the risk of feeling cold due to evaporation.

The Baltimore has a 500 denier outer shell with full

venting and five-point CE protection. There's also a removable REISSA waterproof and breathable drop lining and retractable neon covers incorporated into the sleeves.

It comes in sizes S-5XL in black or black/stone, and retails for **£319.99**

Riders can pair the Baltimore with the new Outlast Strada or Outlast Diablo gloves. Both are a mix of leather and textile, with Hipora breathable waterproof membranes and TPU armour over the knuckles. The Strada sells for **£89.99** and the Diablo **£99.99**

**CALL: 0117 971 9200**

**VISIT: [www.thekeycollection.co.uk](http://www.thekeycollection.co.uk)**





## Yamaha BS Batteries

Yamaha has added an entry-level range of batteries to its genuine parts line-up. BS Batteries will run alongside its Yuasa range, and offer an option for the budget-conscious. They come prefilled and factory activated, so there's no acid to mess about with, and are maintenance free.

Yamaha says spec and quality are high for the price, which starts **from £14.69**.

There's also a range of Yamaha battery chargers/maintainers, and various devices to help keep track of battery condition. They are, of course, all available from all Yamaha authorised dealers.



**VISIT:** [www.yamaha-motor.co.uk](http://www.yamaha-motor.co.uk)

## Knox HC Tech

Knox says its new CE-approved Original Equipment back protector, the HC Tech, is lighter than a First Class letter. The size small is just 86 grams, which is pretty light. It's only 19mm thick and has a smooth covering and specially designed edging so Knox says it'll be barely noticeable in a jacket.

Despite its featherweight dimensions, it exceeds the levels required for the new CE EN1621-2:2014 standard, and was tested at -20°C and +40°C to ensure that levels of protection are consistent in varying conditions.

The Knox HC Tech is produced in three sizes, to suit both men's and ladies' jackets, and is available as Original Equipment in Knox partners' ranges – they include Triumph, Revit, Indian,



Victory and RS Taichi. Riders wishing to upgrade their current jacket, can also buy one direct from Knox.

**PRICE:** £19.99

**CALL:** 01900 825825

**VISIT:** [www.planet-knox.com](http://www.planet-knox.com)

## Dexshell Protherm Socks

Dexshell Hytherm Pro Socks are designed to feel and fit like a normal outdoor/boot sock, but are waterproof, breathable and insulated.

Made using the latest in laminated fabric technology, they feature a merino wool and terry loop inner for warmth; a Porelle waterproof and breathable membrane to help keep rain out; and a fast-drying nylon yarn outer, which is tough and abrasion-resistant for a long life.

Much less expensive than waterproof boots, they're currently available in sizes S-XL at a special price of **£24.99** (normally £28.99) from Nippy Normans.



**VISIT:** [www.nippynormans.com](http://www.nippynormans.com)

## Ikon Basix

As the name suggests, Ikon's new shocks are aimed at the budget-conscious rider who's more concerned with something that just gets the job done, rather than with a lot of frippery and bling.

They start **from £199.60** a pair, and for that you get chrome-plated bodies, fixed rate damping, three-position adjustable preload, and a black powder-coated narrow series progressive rate spring.

Ikon says it's managed to maintain quality but keep the price low by offering a more basic spec, so, unlike its other shocks, the Basix don't have adjustable damping.

They're rebuildable and revalvable; individually dyno-tested before leaving the factory; and are available for a range of makes and models, both on- and off-road.



**PRICE:** £199.60

**CALL:** 01926 430562

**VISIT:** [www.ikonshocks.co.uk](http://www.ikonshocks.co.uk)



## Gerbing 12v Heated Jacket Liner

**RIDER:** John Milbank

**MILES:** 1000

**PRICE:** £169.99

**CONTACT:** gerbing.co.uk



Being cold on a motorcycle in the winter isn't just an inconvenience – it can be dangerous. With my own built-in thermal fat layer, I didn't think I'd ever need heated kit, but spending more and more hours on the bike as the temperatures drop has made me change my mind.

Gordon Gerbing began developing electrically heated clothing for the aeronautics industry back in 1976, and now the business is a leading manufacturer of kit for skiing, horse riding, rambling and, of course, motorcycling. Available as 12v and 7v garments, the ability to wire into the motorcycle's charging circuit, rather than carry a lithium-polymer battery, makes the 12v kit the best choice for bikers.

At full power the Gerbing Heated Jacket Liner will draw 6.4A, but trust me – you don't need that much juice unless you're riding in the Arctic. Power is fed to a cable that comes out of a zip inside the jacket, supplying the Microwire heating elements on the chest, back, collar and sleeves. Microwire was developed to meet the rough treatment a Special Forces soldier would put it through, without being bulky – carbon-fibre wires were too brittle and thick, while copper heated too slowly, and could fail. Using bundles of microscopic stainless steel strands, the heating element is guaranteed for life

– if it fails, it will be repaired or replaced for free.

The Thinsulate soft-shell jacket replaces your outer jacket's liner, and is a snug, comfortable fit, with inner and outer pockets. Zips at the end of each arm hide plugs to attach Gerbing's heated gloves – fed by a second input cable – while an accessory lead can power heated trousers or socks.

The jacket comes with a wiring harness and a selection of fuses, which is easily connected to the bike – I have the cable coming out under the seat of my Kawasaki Z1000SX. An essential purchase is a heat controller – starting at £25.99 for the four-level Junior Controller, I've been using the

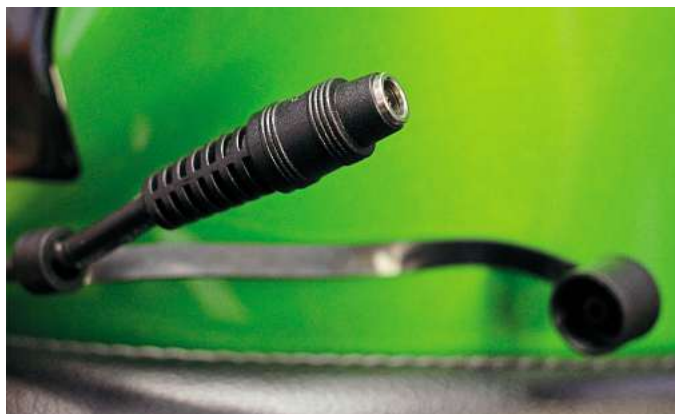
TC-Dual Portable Temperature Controller (£59.99), which allows you to precisely set the temperature you want over two separate channels using a pair of digital displays – ideal if you're also using heated gloves. Cleverly, this controller remembers your last heat setting when disconnected from the bike.

At first, plugging yourself into the bike for each ride can seem a faff, but the comfort is well worth the effort – riding to the Motorcycle Live Show at the NEC early one morning, I soon regretted turning it off to see what difference it made. As there's no thermostat, you need to set a higher temperature when

you pull away, then reduce it after a few minutes. The warmth comes through very quickly, and feels great on a long ride.

If you forget to unplug when you stop, the connection easily pulls apart, and the design means there's no real chance of shorting the circuit as the plug drops away. As it's wired directly to the battery, it's wise to start the bike before plugging in.

If your journeys are short, you may not benefit so much from heated kit, but the minor hassle of popping a plug into a fly-lead's socket really does pale into insignificance if you're going for longer rides during the winter.



Connections are easy to manage and waterproof.



The control box features a digital readout to make setting it a doddle.



# GERBING

LEADING IN HEATED CLOTHING

## Cold?



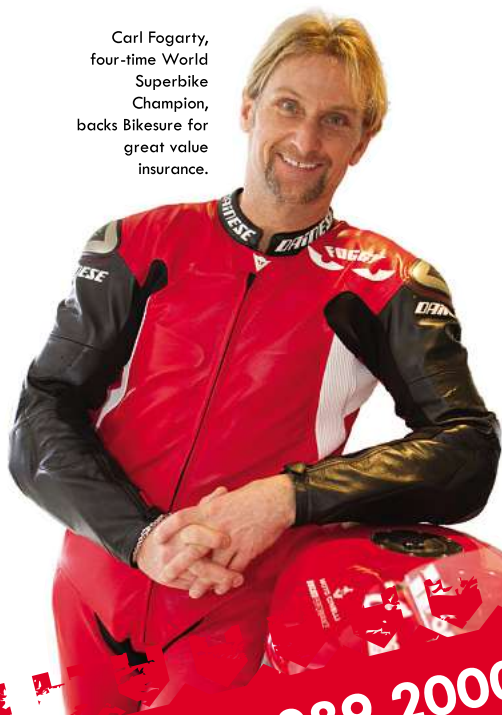
With over 30 years experience and the largest range of heated clothing in the UK we have everything you will need to keep warm this winter.

## Cured!

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four-time World  
Superbike  
Champion,  
backs Bikesure for  
great value  
insurance.



**0800 089 2000**  
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- Laid-up Cover
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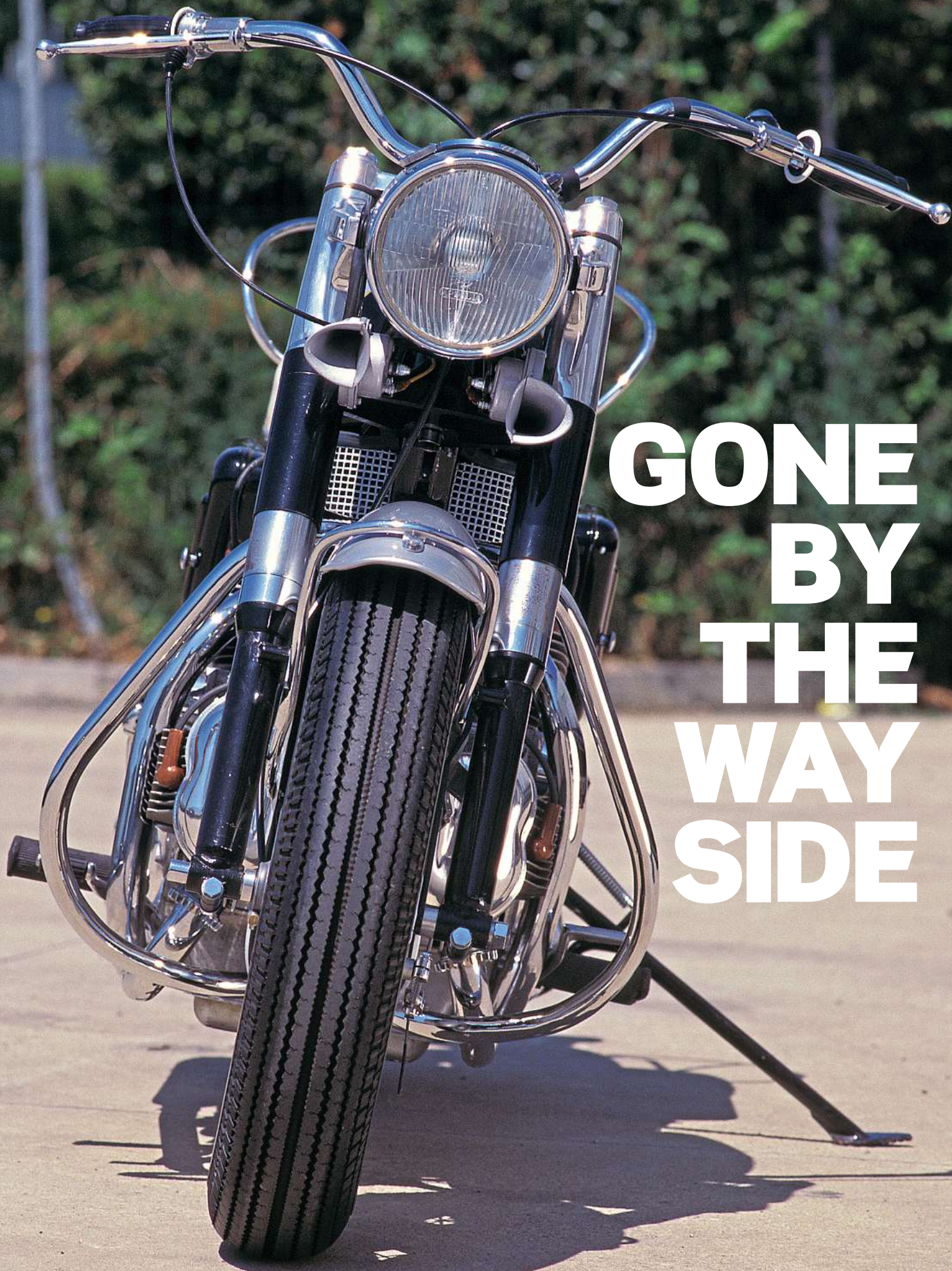
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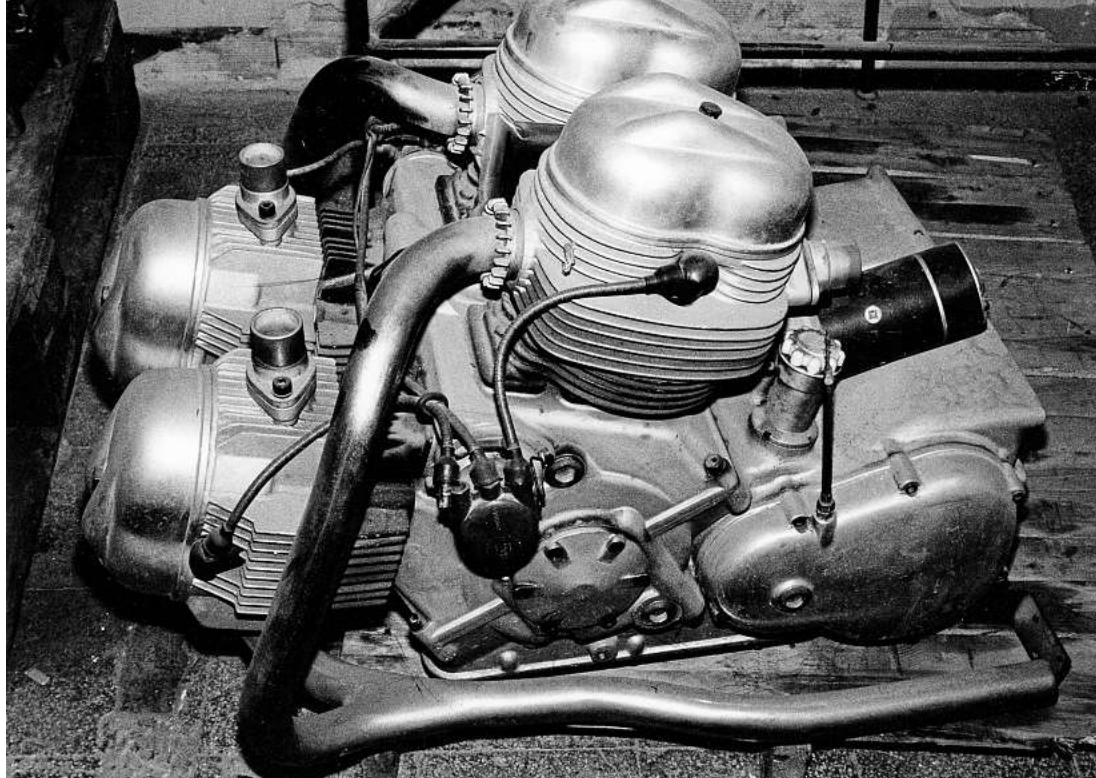


**DUCATI APOLLO 1260**

**GONE  
BY  
THE  
WAY  
SIDE**







**LEFT:** The engine was as good as you hope it was. For the 1960s era in which it was developed this was a very quick and very smooth lump that really deserved to have got into dealers around the world.

## Ducati cancelled its V4 Apollo on safety grounds in 1963. Has it got any safer since? We were about to find out...

**WORDS:** Alan Cathcart **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Kyoichi Nakamura and Kel Edge

**M**ysterious and monolithic, Ducati's abortive V4 Apollo has always had one big question hanging over it: what's it really like to ride? Because of safety concerns thanks to the tyre problems of 52 years ago, no journalist was ever allowed to test it back then – and until the generosity of Hiroaki Iwashita brought the sole surviving example back into the public domain, Ducati's dinosaur was a two-wheeled fossil, set in stone.

Now, thanks to the hard work of former Ducati Corse race mechanic Giuliano Pedretti and his colleagues, who carefully restored the sole surviving as-found example into running condition, I can supply the answer.

Iwashita-san acquired the Daytona showbike, the second of the two Apollos built, in 1986 from Cincinnati-based DomiRacer Inc., then America's largest vintage parts specialist, whose owner Bob Schanz had acquired the warehouse contents of New Jersey-based US Ducati importer Berliner Motor Corporation when the company closed down two years earlier.

Among the many Ducati artefacts was the Apollo prototype, "somewhat neglected and shop worn, but missing only the original (fuel) tank", according to Schanz in a letter he wrote to me in April 1984. "I'll let you know if I get it running, unless you want to buy it from me as is?" I passed on the chance and I've regretted it ever since, waving goodbye to what is today most assuredly a million dollar motorcycle.

So instead it was Iwashita-san who bought the bike from DomiRacer a couple of years later for \$17,000 – big money, back then – and secreted for the next decade in his private collection in Japan until 1995, when he displayed it at a vintage bike show in Tokyo. This alerted Ducati to the bike's existence, and when the factory museum was established in the wake of the TPG takeover at the end of 1996, in due course it became a centrepiece exhibit on extended loan, after Pedretti &

Co. brought it back to original, running condition. But, still – it had never been ridden in public, so when Ducati decided to bring the Apollo to Britain to run it at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in front of 120,000 spectators, they did me the honour of asking if I'd ride it for them there.

Sadly, family commitments made that impossible – so instead they asked me to come to Bologna a month or so earlier to make sure it was running okay for whoever took my place. Happy to oblige, I made my way to Italy to put the bike through its paces.

While the pair of white-walled 16in Goodyears the Apollo wore for my test were the same type as those that had rendered the bike unsafe over 50 years previously, they were at least freshly-fitted new-old stock, so quite adequate for a gentle cruise in which the headlamp-mounted Jaeger speedo's needle didn't once pass the

**“There's no record from the 60s of how much torque the Apollo ever produced, which is a shame.”**







70mph mark – yes, miles not kilometres, inevitably reflecting the American market it was built for. At just 760mm/29.5in high, the relatively plush seat is low enough to throw a leg over easily, and once astride the Apollo you're immediately surprised how low-slung and slim it feels – it isn't as wide as it looks once you're sitting on it, and indeed seems hardly any bulkier than a bevel-drive desmo V-twin.

The high, pulled-back handlebar is very 1960s, very US of A, though not as exaggerated as on some later Harleys, and combined with the well-placed footrests which aren't nearly as far forward as on many modern cruisers, delivers a surprisingly comfy riding stance which isn't a problem at speed, in spite of the high 'bars – you don't feel you have to hang on too tight, and there's no instability at speed. Just chill out and cruise.

Okay – time to do just that, by scorning the kickstart and twisting the ignition key in its slot in the headlamp shell, to turn the engine over via the Fiat car self-starter, until it chugs into life. The four Dell'Orto racing carbs which the Apollo currently wears (and which presumably therefore indicate that this bike has the most powerful state of tune, not the restricted twin-carb spec) scorn the use of a choke, but on a warm Italian June day the motor catches quite quickly, then settles down to a quite fast idle – no rev counter fitted, of course, but it sounds around 1500rpm – with an unmistakeable lilt more like an American V8, than an Italian four-cylinder minicar.

The Apollo's exhaust note is absolutely unique, quite unlike any V4 Honda, and quite loud, too – the slender twin Silentium silencers don't have a lot of packing in them, and the result has the same trademark lilt as a later desmo V-twin, only busier-sounding and higher-pitched, even at lower rpm. Very distinctive.

Time to motor, and lifting my right toe to engage bottom gear on the one-up/four-down right-foot gearchange with its extremely long lever throw, I was impressed how smoothly the Apollo took off from rest, even if the clutch started slipping at first, until I adjusted it up on the lever. After that it was fine, and without



US Police wanted 16 inches – they ruined it.

abusing it unduly I could make a reasonably spirited traffic-light launch – until the time came to change gear from the long first, up into second. That's when the age and nature of Ducati's V4 cruiser comes to your attention, because even swapping gears in the higher ratios without having to go through neutral is a very slow, measured process, which you must steel yourself not to rush. Do so, and for sure you'll get a false neutral – so respect the slow change, practically count to three before notching the next gear home, and you'll be okay. Mostly.

However, once the next gear higher does go in, the Apollo drives forward eagerly with a very long-legged feel, especially in the intermediate gears – there's great response from the light-action throttle, and frankly there's no way this engine feels like a child of the 60s, more like 20 years later. However, although top gear (fifth, remember, at a time when practically all other bikes, and especially big ones, only had four-speed

There really is more than a certain stylish charm to the Apollo.







gearboxes) feels like an overdrive, so would have been ideal for cruising the freeways then starting to proliferate throughout mid-60s America as part of the Interstate Freeway Expansion Program, there's enough midrange pickup from the meaty 1256cc engine to use the bottom four ratios just as a means of getting into top, and then leaving it there, surfing the rich waves of torque available at almost any revs. There's no record from the 60s of how much torque the Apollo ever produced, which is a shame, but if they ever get it on a dyno again to find out, I'll guarantee the figure will be a stump-pulling one that will shame most modern hardware of the V-twin persuasion.

Yet the Apollo's undoubtedly impressive engine stats are delivered with a smooth panache completely at odds with its 60s genesis. Compared to a British twin of the pre-Isolastic era, or any Harley ever made, it's like setting a sewing machine against a concrete mixer in terms of vibration and riding comfort, only a BMW Boxer of the era delivering anything like the same smoothness at any revs as the Apollo. Out of respect for the bike's rarity I didn't rev it right out, but even at higher rpm the same unruffled, lazy-feeling response we came to take for granted a decade later on any V-twin bearing the Ducati badge, is evident on the Apollo.

At a time when there were no four-cylinder motorcycles of any type on the market, not even MV Agusta's plug-ugly 600 which began production in 1966, the Apollo would have set a standard of performance and rider comfort that even a decade later would set the benchmark for the Japanese to aim at. This was truly a bike ahead of its time, loaded with fine engineering.

Well, engine-wise, that is – for the Apollo's handling is frankly adequate rather than exceptional, even by the standards of the era, and the culprits are the US police department regulations which imposed the use of those 16in tyres on a bike crying out for the 18in sports rubber then being introduced in the mid-60s. Even without the safety considerations which led to the Apollo project's demise, the dynamic limitations of the car-type four-ply Goodyear covers handicap the Apollo's handling potential irredeemably.

They look and feel completely unsuitable for anything more than about 15° of lean, and although it's possible to deck the footrests very easily without too much of a sense of insecurity, you can feel the tread start to move

**ABOVE LEFT:** The Apollo had the potential to sell well. Unfortunately, it never had the chance it deserved.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** At 1256cc, the Apollo's V4 motor was considered a giant at the time.

## Specification

### DUCATI APOLLO 1260

**Engine:** 1256cc, air-cooled, 90°, V4 pushrod four-stroke

**Max power:** 100bhp at 7000rpm (at gearbox)

**Carburation:** 4 x 29mm Dell'Orto with 2 x remote float chambers

**Transmission:** 5-speed with gear primary and duplex chain final drive

**Chassis:** Pressed steel and tubular steel open cradle frame

**Suspension:** (F) 38mm Ceriani telescopic forks  
(R) Tubular steel swingarm with 2 x Ceriani shocks

**Wheelbase:** 1555mm

**Weight:** 271kg dry

**Seat height:** 760mm

**Brakes:** (F) 220mm single leading-shoe drum  
(R) 220mm single leading-shoe drum

**Wheels/tyres:** (F) 5.00 x 16 Goodyear on 3.00in wire-laced wheel  
(R) 5.00 x 16 Goodyear on 3.00in wire-laced wheel

**Top speed:** 120mph

about under you if you start asking too much of the tyres in corners. The long wheelbase certainly makes it handle like a truck in tight corners, but the payoff is good stability round fast sweepers, where the surprisingly effective Ceriani suspension – on the plush side of compliant, but helped to settle over bumps by the bike's 271kg dry weight – felt pretty good by the standards of 40 years ago. And the very springy seat helped soak up any shocks that got past the twin rear shocks.

Really, the only thing on the Apollo, apart from the heavy steering and those ludicrous tyres, which gave serious cause for concern were the brakes. While the matched pair of 220mm single leading-shoe drums front and rear are adequate at slow speeds carrying a rider some way on from his last steak dinner with baked potato and all the trimmings, they fade badly after a couple of hard stops, sending the lever back to the 'bar and making the rear brake pedal all loose and floppy.

Okay, by the standards of the era they were probably the industry average – but with the performance delivered by that fantastic engine, the tyres weren't the only thing that needed attention, just the one that brought an end to the project, full stop.

And that was literally a two-wheeled tragedy, because the inability of the tyre companies to come up with a product capable of harnessing the performance delivered by such a big-engined, heavy bike, deprived 60s bikers of the thrills and satisfaction of riding the first of the next generation of four-cylinder sportbikes.

For although the Berliner Motor Corporation had the right idea in commissioning the Apollo from Ducati back in 1961, it was for what turned out to be the wrong reasons. It is quite understandable that the focus was on the US police market, with its insistence on 16in rubber, but the Apollo might have been better conceived as the world's first four-cylinder sportbike.

It needed the tyres and handling to match that goal. Even at the higher price that the Italian V4 would have dictated, compared to the Triumph Bonneville that later became the benchmark sportbike of the 1960s, the US market – and those of us in Europe – wouldn't have had to wait another 10 years for Kawasaki to do the job properly with the arrival of the Z-1, in the wake of the CB750 Honda. After riding it I'm convinced that the Ducati Apollo was one of the great missed opportunities of world biking. What a pity.



## Kawasaki Vulcan S launch report

# VULCAN S FLEXIBLE FRIEND

It's an interesting concept from Kawasaki, making a bike that is more about fitting the rider, increasing said rider's confidence and doing it all in the cruiser style. But does it work? *MSL* went Spain-side for the world launch.

WORDS: Carli-Ann Smith PHOTOGRAPHY: James Wright/Double Red

### THE ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

This is the Kawasaki Vulcan S. Basically it's a dressed up Er6 in cruiser clothes but with the emphasis on attracting riders who like the cruiser style but can find more conventional machines in the sector too heavy and imposing. It costs £6099 (£5949 until April 1, 2015), has a liquid-cooled four-stroke 649cc motor that kicks out 61bhp at 7500rpm and a respectable 46.5lb-ft at 6600rpm.

**S**o this is the Vulcan S, on paper it's familiar fare and should at least be enough of a motorcycle to tempt plenty of riders in.

In fact, pigeon-holing this particular bike into 'just' the cruiser way of things is to miss the point of what this bike can actually deliver. Up to a point.

Packed into the steel frame is a retuned version of the Versys 650 and ER6 649cc liquid-cooled, four-stroke parallel-twin motor. At 61bhp at 7500rpm and 46.5lb-ft at 6600rpm there's plenty of poke on tap when you need it. Easy-going, not intimidating for the rider who definitely isn't in the market for the latest 220bhp superbike.

Purposefully tuned to suit new riders, lower end rpm performance came under the Kawasaki spotlight for a tweak. Tuning the camshaft profiles and intake funnels helped make things smooth but still retained enough grunt when needed.

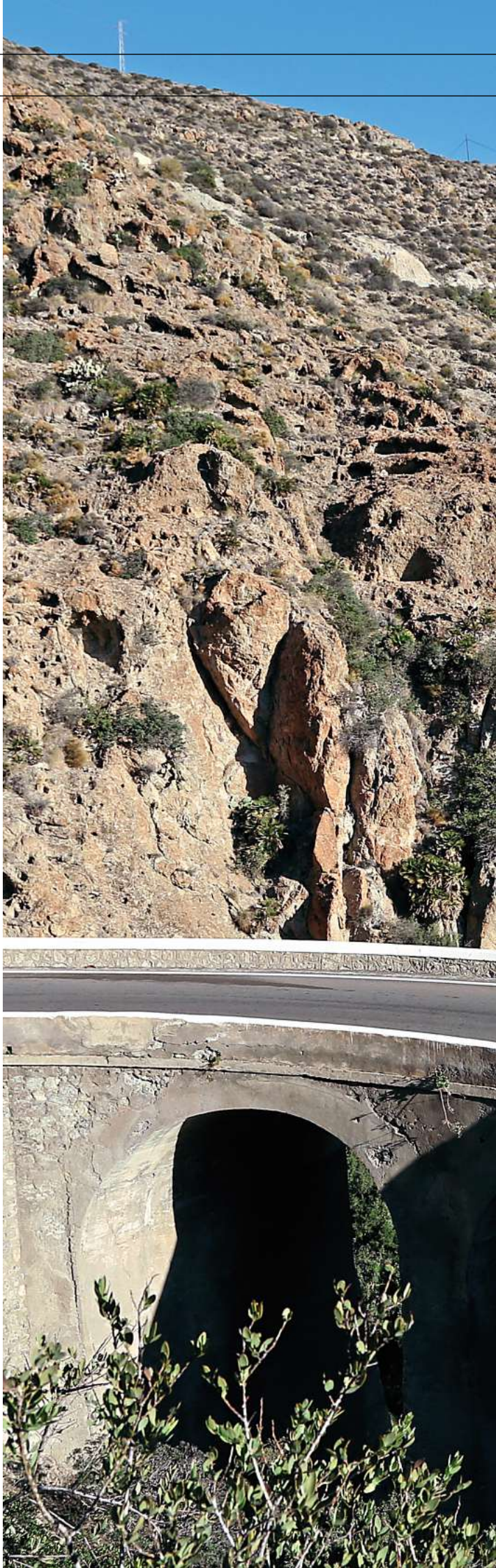
In fact, there's a really nice touch to the engine work done. Several times on the launch ride I deliberately went into junctions and roundabouts in too high a gear to see just how 'friendly' the 'friendly' tuning had made the

motor – and it really works. Even deliberately trying to stall the bike like this couldn't fault the motor. Even in fourth gear going round a small roundabout, the Vulcan S just chugged around and recovered as soon as I opened the throttle. Aww... it takes care of the ham-fisted newbie too. How very sweet.

There's a lot of refinement in this little motor. Pulling away from a standstill is smooth and largely effortless – the particularly light clutch is nicely married to the motor's character. But don't let that fool you into thinking that the Vulcan S lacks a bit of punch. There's ample power when you wind it on – enough to put a grin on the faces of more experienced riders.

In comparison to the Versys and the ER6, torque is down by 0.5lb-ft, however, it comes in 400rpm earlier in the rev range. Power comes in 1000rpm earlier than its sibling bikes and the Vulcan S is actually putting out 8bhp less than the Versys and 11bhp less than the ER6.

Kawasaki claims that fuel efficiency has been improved by 5% on the previous ER6/Versys engine and I managed to get a return of 56mpg while riding on the launch in Spain.











Gear indicator (round, red) costs extra.



Five way adjustable lever is welcome.



Brake, wheel, swingarm are stylish.

## The men with the plan

Yoshifumi Mano – Vulcan S project leader from Kawasaki Japan and Kotaro Otani, corporate planning for Kawasaki Europe

### Where do you anticipate this being your biggest seller?

Kotaro Otani: "We think that the biggest market for us will be France or Germany but of course we are considering all of Europe – including the UK."

### Why did you choose now for the launch of the Vulcan S?

Yoshifumi Mano: "It's a difficult question. We can't develop everything at once so we decided that we'd launch the more mainstream ER6 N and F first for Europe. Now, the customers aren't only mainstream – there are many differently minded customers to suit so we've decided to make an alternative choice of entry level bike for them."

### Why keep with the Vulcan name?

Mano: "The Vulcan S is not typical cruiser but if we felt that if we changed the brand

name, then it may confuse our customers. We think that our brand is valuable so we wanted to keep it. The Vulcan S is an evolution on what is already strong."

### Was it more important to have cruiser styling or an entry level machine with a low seat?

Mano: "We did many sketches of concept motorcycles with low seats – cruiser style, supersport style and off-road styled. When we spoke with our customers they understood the cruiser style and thought it looked cool."

### You've said that the Vulcan S is an introduction to the Kawasaki brand, so what's the next step for Vulcan S owners?

Mano: "It is difficult to estimate. It might be that once the Vulcan S customer has gained some experience on the machine, they might want to try something else with a different style. They might go to the Vulcan 1700, Z800 or the Z1000SX – they could even go to the H2 or the H2R next!"



Mano (left) and next to him is Otani.

**Adjustability is a major selling point of the Vulcan S, did you explore the possibility or making it so the seat, handlebars etc. could be moved by the rider like a car seat instead of having to fit accessories?**

Mano: "We did have the idea of a sliding seat and the movable handlebars but we need to balance the specification, cost and design. If we can see the possibility to make this as a production model, then it could be something that we develop on the next model – we can consider this, but at the moment we can't say we will definitely do it."





**ABOVE:** You can have any colour you like, as long as it's in this line-up here. But why is there no green, Mr Kawasaki?

**RIGHT:** Slim-made exhaust keeps things svelte but cosmetic widener on the black bits gives a chunky look where wanted. Clever.



## So what's it like to ride?

Time for a cliché or two. Sitting on the plush leather seat, I felt like Cinderella – here was a bike that fits me! At 5ft 6in, I don't consider myself a short person, but often on larger capacity machines I find I have to shimmy around to reach things and putting my feet flat on the ground can often be a challenge.

I was surprised at the light weight of the bike – it looks like a bulky machine, and it is substantial, but what struck me was how light it felt both at standstill and on the move.

The dash looks simple but it's well stocked with a digital speedo, clock, odometer, dual trip meter, fuel range, current fuel consumption, eco riding indicator and fuel gauge – the latter two Kawasaki's research

has found to be appreciated by new riders – especially those coming from a car background.

The traditional style mirrors offer plenty of vision behind and thanks to the stripped back dash, there's a panoramic view of the road ahead with the fat handlebars offering the perfect frame.

The slim chassis allows you to filter with confidence and the immediate acceleration powers you into (and out of) any gaps.

Find yourself an open road and some twisty bends and the engine comes alive and before you know it, you're performing roaring overtakes and having some fun. It's an easy bike to manage and neither it or that motor will

shock even the newest of riders as the power builds progressively.

Often with 'cruiser-style' machines there is the chance – and often not the choice – of 'grounding out' – whether it be the footpegs or the exhaust that scrapes along the floor. But this wasn't a problem on the Vulcan S as it has a ground clearance of 130mm.

Cornering requires very little effort on the bars and working my way round the sweeping Spanish bends, I found myself hankering after more.

So, it looks the business, has a friendly but grunty engine and you can customise the fit to suit you – and all this for just over £6000. It's a welcome way to do the welcome thing to new riders.

## Closest Rival



### HARLEY-DAVIDSON 883 IRON – £7145

If you speak to anyone about a cruiser – non-riders and riders alike – the first brand they say is Harley-Davidson.

And if you're in the market for a motorcycle at the entry-level cruiser end then the 883 is going to factor in your consideration.

It uses the firm's an 883cc V-twin engine, has mid-mounted controls and authentic all-American styling.

The 883 Iron has a classic peanut tank – with a capacity of 12.5 litres, drag styled handlebars and features ABS.

## Specification

### KAWASAKI VULCAN S – £5949

**Engine type:** Liquid-cooled, four-stroke, parallel twin

**Displacement:** 649cc

**Bore x stroke:** 83 x 60mm

**Compression ratio:** 10.8:1

**Carburation:** Fuel injection – 38mm x2 with sub-throttles

**Power:** 61bhp @ 7500rpm

**Torque:** 46.5lb-ft @ 6600rpm

**Transmission:** Six-speed, return

**Final drive:** Chain

**Frame:** Perimeter, high-tensile steel

**Chassis dimensions:** 2310mm long, 880mm wide, 1100mm tall

**Caster angle:** 31°

**Trail:** 120mm

**Ground clearance:** 130mm

**Suspension:** (F) 41mm telescopic fork. (R) Offset laydown, single-shock, linkage-equipped with 7-way adjustable preload

**Brakes:** ABS available (F) Single 300mm disc with dual-piston caliper. (R) Single 250mm disc with single-piston caliper

**Tyres:** (F) 120/70R18M/C 59H. (R) 160/60R17M/C 69H

**Wheelbase:** 1575mm

**Seat height:** 705mm

**Fuel capacity:** 14 litres

**Kerb weight:** 228kg with ABS

**Colours:** Metallic royal purple, flat ebony and pearl crystal white.

**Contact:** [www.kawasaki.co.uk](http://www.kawasaki.co.uk)



## So come on then, should I buy one?

Whether you're a new rider, aren't terribly tall or are looking for a machine to build your confidence – then the Vulcan S may be the right choice for you. It's got a friendly but gutsy engine, a nice low seat height and there are plenty of opportunities to make the bike your own.

"We want to make riders' entry into the two-wheeled market as comfortable and as fun as we can, we want them to want to be motorcyclists for the rest of their lives," said, Martin Lambert, Kawasaki's European press officer.

Kawasaki was keen to point out that it doesn't see the Vulcan S as 'just a cruiser' – and to a fairly large extent along those

lines this bike is purposefully not covered in chrome – although an extensive list of accessories including chrome covers mean you can change the bike to suit your tastes should you want the shiny stuff.

Included in the accessories list are: a 12v socket, gear indicator, luggage rack striping kit, medium and large quick release windshield, GPS fitting kit, passenger back rest and leather panniers.

Those with an A2 licence can get a piece of the Vulcan S pie too as an A2 compliant version is available. Once you get your full licence, then simply take it to your local dealer and have the restrictor kit taken out.



**ABOVE:** Tidy back-end shows that this ain't no old, clunky cruiser from some greaser's shed.



**RIGHT:** Three options of seat (standard, reduced-reach and extended-reach) means that riders can get the right fit for their bod.



It's worth noting that the route we rode was the usual up and down stuff but also took in motorway roads, plenty of starting and stopping and a variety of road conditions so that 56mpg figure could easily be improved on.

The Vulcan S has a new perimeter, high-tensile steel frame. The chassis has purposefully been kept slim so that riders can easily get their feet down when needed. A new dual wall exhaust system has been developed too with an under engine muffler to help keep the slim shape.

The UK will be getting the version fitted with the Bosch 9.1M ABS unit. Braking is provided by a single 300mm diameter disc up front, gripped by a dual piston caliper and a single 250mm diameter disc on the rear with single piston caliper. They're progressive and confidence inspiring instead of snappy – again, a purposeful decision by Kawasaki is used here so as to not shock new riders.

The telescopic fork on the front and the offset laydown single-shock linkage – equipped with seven-way adjustable preload – on the rear, offers great suspension and easily dealt with the differing road conditions on the launch.

It's specifically new on the wheel front, too. Five-spoke cast wheels have been developed for the Vulcan S

– there's an 18in on the front and a 17in on the rear.

Kawasaki says that it decided to make the Vulcan S chain driven rather than shaft or belt driven to limit the amount of 'mechanical loss' – making the most from the 649cc engine – plus it's lighter than a belt drive so that helps keeps the kerb weight down to a manageable 225kg.

At 5ft 6in I could easily reach the feet forward controls and the floor thanks to the 705mm seat height. One of the key points of this bike is the customisation available – the brake and clutch levers have five different settings and the footpegs can be adjusted into three different positions – either keep them standard or move them forwards or backwards by 25mm.

And that's not where the personalisation stops – Kawasaki is calling it 'ERGOFIT'. There are three choices of setup: reduced reach, mid-reach – which is the standard machine as bought in a dealership – and extended reach to suit short, medium and tall riders respectively.

Those needing reduced or extended reach have the option to change the handlebars and the seat from the accessory range which changes the dimensions of the bike – exact prices haven't been announced yet but it's expected to be around £230.





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# First Rides

BMW F800 R





# SIMPLY BETTER

More power, better looks and more technology. Meet BMW's new F800 R.

WORDS: Simon Roots PHOTOGRAPHY: BMW

**L**aunched in 2000, the original F800 R was considered by most to be a trustworthy, simple and relatively affordable point of access into BMW's

elaborate arsenal of premium contemporary motorcycles.

It offered no more than it delivered, and so found a considerable degree of success in the Roadster market for many years, remaining relatively original for the core of its 14-year life. But at the back end of 2014, BMW showed off a new incarnation of the parallel-twin powered street bike. Arguably it was much needed with competition substantially hotting up in the middleweight naked sector thanks to new additions such as Yamaha's range of MT's and an abundance of other like-minded rivals.

Addressing the looks, the ergonomics and introducing technological baubles to the package have produced a gentle evolution of the bike, intended to make it more visually appealing and upping the fun levels, too.

The old headlight has been consigned to history, replaced by a unit that now conforms to what BMW designers think the public want. It's said to work better at night too. But I liked the old one, and think the new one looks at best a bit like the Suzuki B-King's light, at worst the Inazuma...

Other design touches include fresh cowls and covers, adding a frisson of aggression in an otherwise friendly look. Replacing the old right-way-up forks and conventionally mounted brake calipers is the front end off the new R 1200 R and a new set of lighter wheels. The forks are nonadjustable, but fashionably upside down, while



The view from behind the bars is clean and simple.



## Specification

### BMW F800 R

**Engine:** 798cc, liquid-cooled, 8v, dohc, inline twin

**Max power:** 90bhp @ 8000rpm

**Max torque:** 63.4lb-ft @ 5800rpm

**Frame:** Aluminium alloy perimeter frame

**Suspension:** (F) 43mm USD fork, nonadjustable (R) monoshock, rebound and preload adjustable

**Brakes:** (F) Four piston radial Brembo calipers, 320mm discs (R) single piston caliper, 265mm disc

**Wheelbase:** 1526mm

**Seat height:** 790mm (770/820mm options)

**Weight:** 202kg (kerb)

**Fuel capacity:** 15 litres

**Contact:** [www.bmw-motorrad.co.uk](http://www.bmw-motorrad.co.uk)

**RIGHT:** ESA and new lighting make the bike look and feel different.

**BELOW:** Better handling makes for a far more pleasurable ride.

the Brembo brakes are now radial mount jobbies.

The bikes we rode were also equipped with BMW's entry level ESA system, that just changes the rear's rebound settings electronically according to three modes – sport, normal and comfort. That's not the only concession to modernity, with these bikes also fitted with the ASC traction control system. As ever with BMW, the base bike is a blank canvas for you to add extras to. Remapping has found an extra 3bhp, and that's the new bike for you. So what's it like?

Very capable, if tearing around the hills of Almeria for 200 miles was anything to go by. The launch ramped up speed and challenges as the day progressed, so an easy ride along the coast highlighted how easy the F 800 R is to ride.

The clutch has been made easier to operate, and in conjunction with a tooth coming off the front sprocket, drive is clean and consistent. The parallel twin motor doesn't shake disapprovingly at low speeds in the wrong gear, rather

offering enough pull at low revs to satisfy even the laziest of riders.

The revised ergonomics work, too. Making the bars straighter and offering more legroom makes the bike more intuitive than before, and its balance is excellent. BMW offers an A2 version of the F 800 R, and with its decent turning circle it'll make mincemeat of any coned configuration.

So far, so good. But surely the escape from the coast to the hills would see the 798cc parallel twin suffer, especially as there's only 8500 revs and a claimed 90bhp to play with. Well, what the motor lacks in character it makes up for in sincere enthusiasm. It offers linear power delivery, with only a small boost at around 6000rpm, so there's plenty of flexibility on offer.

The supposed small rev range, however, actually incorporates plenty of shove. You're not feeding it gears constantly, rather in the confined environment of Spain's open spaces, it can push you out of a corner at 3000rpm and get you to the next 5000 revs later without swapping ratios.

Making the bars straighter and offering more legroom makes the bike more intuitive than before.







## Pick a package

The F800 R has the option of being specced-up, and very few bikes will be sold as standard – costing £7595 OTR. The Touring Package (+£455) adds the on-board computer, heated grips, pannier mountings and a centrestand, while the Comfort Package (+£720) gives you Electronically Adjustable Suspension, Tyre Pressure Control and Automatic Stability Control.



### STYLING

The new look of the F800 R ensures the middleweight Beemer remains an attractive proposition among its peers. Perhaps the most notable alteration to the bike's refined image is the front headlamp, which suggests a more aggressive and lively design. The bike's lines are also a lot sleeker with a suggestively minimalist look about it.

### ENGINE

The liquid-cooled 798cc parallel twin engine received no significant changes, although output is up by 3bhp through new mapping (a 48bhp option is a free downgrade for A2 customers). Torque remains constant at 63.4lb-ft. As well as making the gearing shorter, via a tooth dropped on the front sprocket, internal ratios have also been modified, with a new first and second gear. The clutch has been made to feel lighter at to engage. The exhaust is the same as on the old bike, but the optional extra Akrapovic can add bark, bite and lop 1.7kg off in the process.

### CHASSIS

The frame and swingarm components have not changed, but some of the bits added to them have. New aluminium handlebars offer a more relaxed stance on the bike, while the footpegs have been relocated 10mm further forward and 10mm lower. Seat height has also been reduced by 10mm to 790mm (as well as other seat options being available). The R 1200 R's suspension is now used, so a USD unit replaces the old RWU forks. The rear shock (with or without ESA) has adjustment for rebound and preload. New Brembo radial mount calipers have a two channel ABS system as standard.



Racing blue/light white



Racing blue/black satin



Light white





## Closest Rival



### YAMAHA MT-09

Yamaha's enigmatic triple cylinder excited the biking world following its release in 2013. Facilitating aggressive styling, a pokey motor and a lot of character, the Japanese streetbike soared to sales success with its £6949 price tag. Ask anyone that owns one and they'll tell you the thing they like best about the bike is its abundance of torque. But they'll probably be just as quick to denounce the bike's poor fuelling and snatchy riding experience.

A soft rear shock doesn't help things further, but assuming you're not trying to set lap records, the latter isn't such a problem. The naked works well over large distances and is a relatively comfortable machine to ride. Its dash is a tad too small for a lot of people's liking and the model is also rather primitive on the technological front. But what can you expect for under £7k?

While the extra 3bhp is not really noticeable, the improvements made to the bike's suspension are stark. The front now offers plenty of support, and though the forks are nonadjustable on economic grounds, the settings mean the front doesn't capitulate at the first sign of a cornering encounter. Shod with Metzeler Z8 Interact tyres, it was only at extreme levels of lean where the communication with the road turned

**ABOVE:**  
The new look is far more attractive.

**BELOW:**  
Not all of the bike is radically changed. You can easily see the old model at the rear.



down into the corridor of uncertainty.

The rear's ESA also has a palpable effect, although I only felt it jumping from Sport to Comfort, not noticing the single step to or from Normal. The F800 R's electronics didn't intervene at any point, with the ASC traction aid and ABS unemployed other than cajoling it into action. The traction control can be turned off on the hoof to allow wheelies, but the ABS is a permanent feature.

The ride turned into a dangerous competition with our guide, mounted on a K1600, trying desperately to make us grow small in his mirrors. But for all the might of the six-cylinder bike, the plucky parallel stuck to its twin pipes. We slipped on to the motorway for a few miles, where it climbed to 120mph with ease, before settling on a comfortable 100mph cruising speed, with no notable vibes appearing between 60 and 120mph thanks to the additional con rod to balance the motor. For a few miles I flicked

through the controls, noting that the bike's mpg figures were impressively economical on such a throttle heavy journey. I then thought that the analogue speedo display was hard to read, jumping as it did by 20kph increments, making holding a constant speed through, say, average speed cameras difficult. Hardly the most damning criticism...

So the bike's better, more controlled with extra power and a less divisive look. But in many ways it sits in a no man's land of middleweight naked, inspiring no discernible compulsion to buy it over its rivals. One group of rivals are more powerful, sportier and packed with character (MT-09, Street Triple, Z800) while in the other camp the competition is cheaper, friendlier and simpler (MT-07, Er-6F, SV650). Given it's the introduction to the range, BMW had to err on the side of manners rather than mayhem, although if you go looking for trouble the F800 R is capable of finding it.



# BACK TO SCHOOL TO LEARN

Wanting to top up his off-road abilities, Bruce Wilson headed to Kawasaki's Mick Extance Off-Road Experience in Wales.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Charlie Oakman

**W**hen I saw the drop I was in two minds about whether my KLX450 and I could even contemplate such a descent. Having just navigated our way through some dense woodland, my body was aching, my breath still escaping me, and now this. I crept my way to the head of the 20ft almost vertical route, took a moment to remember all Mick had taught me throughout the day, and then just went for it.

Rewind eight hours and I was faced with a hugely different scenario. I'd just arrived at the Mick Extance Kawasaki Off-Road Experience, being overwhelmed by the beauty of the 1500 acre woodland base on the outskirts of Llangynog, Mid Wales. The kettle was on and the hardest decision I'd had to make so far was whether I

wanted Hobnobs or custard creams with my cuppa. I was in a group with five other riders and we were all subjected to the same cheery welcome from our host, Mick.

A seven times Dakar racer, his background also includes British, European and World class-level enduro competition. But he was here today with a very different hat on. As he began by explaining to us, his main aims were to keep us safe, introduce us to the world of off-road and try his hardest to make sure we came away having had a truly fantastic day on the dirt. I liked the sound of that and no one else seemed to complain either. My fellow riders and I were mostly novices in terms of off-road experience.

Mick explained that despite his high-octane background, his real pleasure in life was helping people to start off on the rough stuff. The whole 'experience' is tailored around such candidates, with a variety of







**ABOVE:** Long and steep climbs were tiring on the body.

**TOP RIGHT:** Bouncing off trees was all part of the fun.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Even Bruce learned how to jump, so there's hope for everyone.

routes, challenges and basic exercises in place to accommodate everyone, including those who've never even sat on a bike before.

Having got kitted up, we were led over to a line-up of Kawasaki's latest off-road products. There was everything there from smaller statured 85cc models to whopping 450s. I settled on a KLX450R, but was encouraged by Mick to try out any of the other bikes throughout the day. Each armed with two-wheels, we were given a safety talk on the day's riding and a quick overview of the bikes. Fired up, we headed out of camp, in-line, sticking to fire roads and other relatively simple trails. The whole point in the exercise was to get us warmed up and accustomed to our bikes and the surroundings.

Because the school is set within such huge confines, we were able to ride for a substantial amount of time without ever coming close to the site's boundaries. Twenty minutes later, we came to a clearing in a forest. It was here that we were to learn how to use our feet. There was a 400m rutted-loop for us to tackle, with the idea being that we used our feet to help stabilise and guide the bike throughout. Riding on terrain I'd have naturally steered well clear of, the seated technique worked a treat and I was even more confident on the second run around, knowing that my feet were always in place to kick the bike straight and stop me from toppling over. The exercise was relatively simple, but it was hugely encouraging.

We set off riding again and eventually arrived at a stone-based area where we were to learn all about clutch control and balance. The aim was to take as long as possible to ride between two markers, forcing you to control both your balance and your clutch delivery. Because the ground was uneven and loose, the front wheel wanted to steer itself and this naturally caused me

to become unsettled and lose focus. The first few times I attempted the task I hadn't got very far before my feet were down or the bike had stalled. Mick got us all to calm down, consider our riding stance and steer clear of unnecessary high revs. If the bike pulled left, you should go with it, control it and get it back on the path you wanted it on. Staying relaxed made a huge difference and that reflected in my performance. For a bit of a laugh, all five of us lined up together and set out to cross the distance the slowest. I didn't win.

We were slowly ticking off the basics. Mick judges each rider and every group as he sees them. If some people need more time to advance, one of his instructors will give them extra attention and hopefully help them to achieve their goals. As it was, our group was relatively similar in ability, so we kept the flow and moved on to our next challenge; uphill climbs. The first of which was relatively simple. The angle wasn't too steep and the terrain hard and grippy. Setting off one at a time, we were told to move our weight rearwards for grip, keeping a steady throttle without too many revs or slipping the clutch. Job done, the next hill was harder, but sticking to Mick's rules we all reached the top. The third hill was something else.

It stretched out over half a mile, was littered with felled branches and rocks and had a sheer drop to the left. Before we attempted it, Mick was on hand to give us some guidance. He stressed the importance of speed and forward planning. The width of the route was 10ft, so we had the option to move around it and find the least challenging path. Having a good look before we sped off made a huge amount of difference. I knew roughly where I needed to be and was prepared for a lot of the obstacles I had to tackle. It was gruelling, hard work, but after an unplanned dismount halfway up I eventually made it to the summit, just in time to head for lunch.





Our group gathered around in a heated woodland cabin, laughing over the morning and devouring the packed lunches which Mick had provided. Life was great and we knew we had the same to come again on the second half. I switched bikes for a KLX250 and followed our leader over some truly breathtaking terrain, looking down on the emerald valleys below. The plan for the second half included further developing our forward planning. We headed to a wooded area with trees about every 6ft. The ground was covered by rocks and twigs, while undulations made the game even harder. We had a start point and a finish line.

However we got between the two was our decision, but the idea was that we consider our paths carefully and use our riding positions to their potential. Heading off one from last, I'd had chance to see a few tricky spots as well as good paths to utilise. Feet up, revs low, the going was really tough, but the feeling was hugely rewarding when I made it to the other side. It reiterated to me how thinking a little can help you a lot.

The theme for the next stint was to remain wooded. On easier routes, we rode together through slightly less dense woods, tackling the odd climb and descent as we came across them. Because the ground was so wet and mushy, it was easy to get a rear wheel digging in and tree roots were simply lethal under our Bridgestone tyres. My mind was on overdrive to take in all the elements, but I was up there and doing it.

To have a little breather, Mick took us over to his mountain-top motocross track. The mile long course was mostly rocky and proved a hoot to have a blast around. But we weren't just there for fun. Lined up at the base of a jump, we were talked over the principles of jumping a bike, before being let loose to have a go. Body neutral, riding a gear higher than normal and with the throttle held at a constant, one-by-one our bikes

## What you might like to know...

### Do I need a full bike licence?

No licence is required. We can cater for all riders aged 10 years and above.

### How much does a day experience cost?

The full day, including bike and kit hire, plus lunch will cost £200. There is also the option of bringing your own bike to ride, for which the charge then drops to £100.

### Do you offer accommodation?

There is accommodation available in the town of Llangynog at the New Inn. Rooms can be booked via the Mick Extance Experience at the discounted rate of £30 per night, per person.

### What kind of bike can I ride?

The full Kawasaki KLX range is available, from 125-450cc. We also offer the option of KX85s.

### Do you do one-on-one training?

We are more than happy to accommodate new or experienced riders on a one-to-one basis. Let us know if you think this would be the best option for you.

### Does it matter if I've not ridden off-road before?

Not at all. Most people we have on the experience haven't and we look forward to encouraging people along during their first time.

### What's the best way to get in touch?

The Mick Extance Kawasaki Experience can be contacted on 01332 347592. For current updates and more information about what's on offer, go online and have a look on [www.mickextanceexperience.com](http://www.mickextanceexperience.com) or find us on Facebook.







**ABOVE:** Mick Extance (right) gives out advice to pupils amid some truly stunning scenery.

morphed into aircraft, before thumping back down to earth, smiles smacked broadly across our faces. What a day we were having. And it still wasn't over. Having tackled climbs in the morning, the focus then changed to descents in the afternoon.

It's one thing going up a hill, but I always find it much more sketchy going down. Mick did a great job of easing my nerves by talking over the technique. Once more, planning a path was key, choosing the right gear was equally important and positioning your body correctly made a huge difference. With my weight over the back of the bike, I made my first run down a route, clutch out, with the engine braking assisting my manual applications of front and rear brake. The more I controlled the speed at the top, the more manageable the runs down seemed, boosting my confidence no end.

Just as with the climbs, we worked our way over more and more challenging descents, with the ultimate

challenge of the day being the sheer-sided drop where this story began. I had illusions of pain, failure and plain embarrassment on my mind. But I also had a day's worth of expert tuition and a whole load of encouragement from my fellow riders to push me forward. Working to what I'd learnt from Mick, I made that call and rode over the edge, rapidly descending as I went, before safely reaching the bottom and allowing the bike's superb suspension to sort the changes in geography. I'd done it. I don't think I stopped smiling until we'd reached the cabin base and I'd got changed into my normal clothes.

The whole day had been exceptional and I couldn't have thought of a more positively fitting way to round it off. The Mick Extance experience had simply been tremendous and I was leaving a better rider, having made new friends and had a top laugh. As far as experiences go, I couldn't have really asked for more.

## Ridden: Kawasaki KLX450R - £6599

Grand in stature, the 450R is the flagship model in Kawasaki's KLX range. Featuring a powerful single-cylinder motor, the super capable enduro-focused model is never more at home than when tackling tough terrain. As with all great bikes in its field, the model's chassis and suspension combination make this machine a standout performer on technical rides, comfortably dealing with everything that crosses its path.

Compared to a motocross bike, the KLX can seem rather softly sprung and oversized in stature, but its design and

build ensures day long rider comfort.

The model's fitted with an electric start, but also boasts a kickstart.

The clutch is light and informative, while gear changes through the five-speed box are effortless and positive. Good fuelling means you get to make the most of the bike's output, which is just as happy tootling through woodlands as it is blasting along trails.

The KLX can be road registered and comes as standard with tough bodywork and incorporated lights both front and rear. Ideal for enduros, it's also a fantastic green lane weapon.





# A modern history of Maynard's boots

**Maynard Hershon**



**S**o long ago that I can't recall what I wore previously, I bought a pair of BMW Gore-Tex boots. They were shockingly expensive at the time but for years and years they kept my feet warm in winter and dry all year long. The uppers, everything above the soles, continue to work as-new. But the soles have grown slick over the years. I took the boots to a cobbler who told me that the soles were moulded to the uppers, sealed on. They could not be replaced.

I gave the BMW boots to a friend who rides fewer miles, most of them urban. They'll keep his feet warm for years.

While I lived in Tucson, I shot informal matches and practised with my handguns at a range a few miles from my home. I'd ride to the range with my equipment in a messenger bag. A few of the shooters told me they were current or ex-motorcyclists.

One range night, one of those guys tapped me on the shoulder and asked me to come out to his car. He reached in and brought out a pair of new-looking Fieldsheer boots.

Sweet old-school British boots, they were, with the zipper up the back, like road-race boots from the Fifties or Sixties. "They're yours," he said.

I tried one on. Fit great. I thanked him then and again later in the evening.

The next week on range night, he did not show up to shoot. It turned out he had been getting rid of things, including those boots. He left a note, I was told, then went down to the railroad tracks near his home (where his wife had taken her own life a decade earlier) and shot himself.

None of us shooters noted any indication that he had anything like that in mind. He was just one of the guys. No moping, no signs of feeling sorry for himself. He was there. Then he was gone.

I wore those boots for a decade. More. They were lighter than the Gore-Tex ones and much cooler, perfect six months a year. Not long ago, when the uppers began to come apart at the sewn seams, I gave the Fieldsheers to a guy who'd been riding in hiking boots.

A few years before Y2K, I bought a pair of Daytonas, and they became my number one boots for a decade plus. Even now they have lots of life left in them.

But this last year or so, the plastic patches on the tops of the toes have begun to crack. I tried two or three kinds of glues with no success. I've resorted to using tenacious camping gear repair tape to hold down the peeling-away strips of plastic.

Handing on kit gives that which is old to us a whole new life, as our man found out after a bout of generosity.

Earlier this year, faced with the demise or imperfection of all my boots, I decided to buy new ones. I visited our fine local independent motorcycle accessory store and settled on a pair of Gaernes, tall, brown, suede-looking boots with those ratcheting plastic straps. The boots are comfortable.

The soles are flexible; I can walk in them. I like them okay. You might love them.

I'm not crazy about those buckles. There are three per boot. If I'm not careful, the middle one will press on my shin in a tender spot. In a half hour or so, the pressure will make me a little crazy. And the (replaceable) soles are thick. I can't feel the shift lever under my foot.

Maybe I like wimpy, not-so-structured boots. I like zipper boots for sure.

Just when it sank in that I'd bought boots I might never love, I read a report about Gasolina boots, made in Mexico. They are old-style boots just in time for the wave of young people discovering matte-grey motorcycling. I put that aspect out of my mind and found Gasolina Boots' website. Hmmm, I said.

I had never bought a pair of boots I couldn't try on, but the thoroughness of the order form and subsequent emails back-and-forth with Ashley Fell of Gasolina gave me confidence.

Took two or three weeks for my boots to arrive. They had been in-stock at Gasolina, luckily, so I did not need boots custom-made.

They are the model called Classics. They're tall and old-school looking, as the model name would certainly indicate. They have zippers up the backs and buckled leather straps at the heels and tops.

No Velcro. No plastic.

Not only are they fitted for foot size, you measure around your calf and the Gasolina folks will make the boots so you can wear your trousers inside, outside or both, your option.

The Gasolina boots fit me great. They're fully leather lined. The stitched-on shift-lever reinforcing pads on the toes are the same leather as the rest of the boots. And the pair didn't cost nearly as much as a first house.

There's snow on the ground and the temps are single digit. I can't wait to wear my new boots on the motorcycle. So far, they work great for walking around on our carpet.

## Who is Hershon?

MSL's Maynard is our man with a very unique view on motorcycling from both sides of the pond. Yes, he is American, yes, he does ride around on a second-hand Kawasaki that causes him grief... and yes, he does have his finger right on the pulse of life on two wheels



# THE PYRENEES TOUR

Starting from Ax-les-Thermes, France



Head north-west on Rue Gaspard Astrie towards Rue Vendémiaire for 39m.



Take the first left on to Rue du Moulinas, go 74m, then take the first right on to Chemin d'en Castel and travel for 32m.



Turn right at Rue Saint-Jérôme and go 48m, then take the first right on to D82 and go 400m.



Take the first right on to Avenue Théophile Delcassé/N20 and follow N20 for 450m.



At the roundabout, take the third exit on to Avenue Adolphe Authie/D613 and follow D613 for 38.5km.



Turn right on to D222, go 3.8km, then turn left on to D107 and follow D107 for 16.0km.



Turn right on to D117 and continue to follow D117 for 62.1km.



At the roundabout, take the forth exit on to Avenue de l'Aérodrome/D117 and travel for 220m.



Merge on to D900 via the ramp to Barcelona/Perpignan-Centre and travel for 3.4km. At the roundabout, take the first exit and stay on D900 heading to A9/Gérone/Perpignan-Centre/Prades.



At the roundabout, take the first exit on to the D900 ramp to A9/Gérone/Andorra la Vella/Prades/Le Soler/Gd Saint Charles and go 230m.



Continue on to D900 and continue to follow D900 for 4.2km.



At the roundabout, take the third exit on to the A9 ramp to Barcelona/Gérone/Le Boulou/Le Perthus/Céret and go 850m, then keep left for 78m to continue towards D115.



Take the ramp to Céret/Prats-de-Mollo-la-Preste/Perpignan/Le Boulou/Argelès-sur-Mer/Port-Vendres/Le Perthus and go 120m.



At the roundabout, take the third exit on to D115 and go 500m.



At the next roundabout take the second exit on to D618A heading to D900/Gérone/Le Perthus/Les Thermes/Argelès-sur-Mer/Port-Vendres and travel 1.1km.



Continue on to D618, travel for 14.8km, then take the third exit at the roundabout and stay on D618 heading to Port-Vendres/Argelès-sur-Mer/Le Racou and travel for 4.7km.



Take exit 13 towards Argelès-sur-Mer/Le Racou/Collioure/La Corniche, go 220m and then at the roundabout, take the forth exit on to D914B and go 170m.



At the roundabout, take the first exit on to Route de Collioure/D114 and follow D114 for 2.6km.



At the roundabout, take the third exit on to Route du Pla de las Fourques and go 650m. At the next roundabout, take the first exit on to Avenue du Miradou and go 120m.



Take a slight left on to Place Gén Lederer, go 42m, then turn left on to Boulevard Camille Palletan and go 130m.



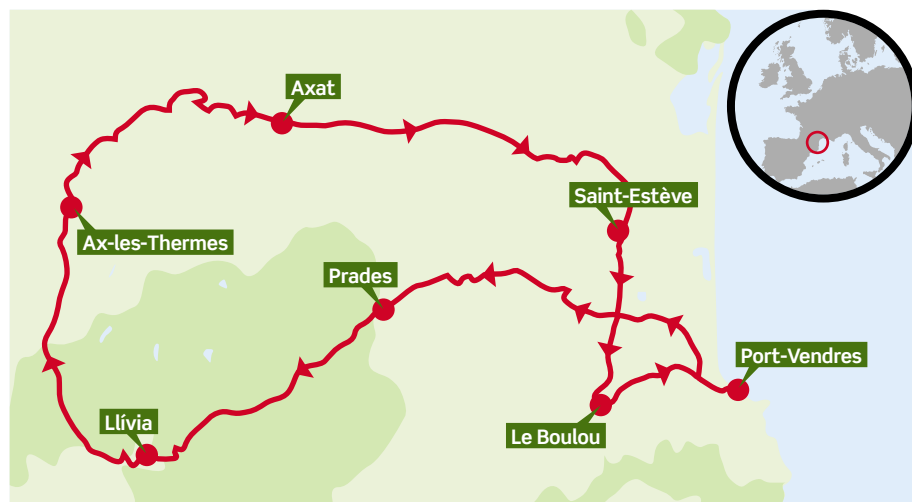
Turn left on to Place de la République and go 28m, then start to head south on Place de la République towards Boulevard Camille Palletan for 28m. Kilometres travelled – 172.3km



Turn right on to Boulevard Camille Pelletan, travel for 87m, then turn right towards Rue Pasteur, go 34m, then take the first left on to Rue Pasteur and go 23m.



Turn right on to Rue du Dr Coste, go 74m with a slight right on to Avenue du Miradou. Travel for 64m.





## EVENTS

The Clive Motorcycle Club (Welshpool) invite riders to submit entries for the 2015 Welsh National Rally to be held on May 9. Regulations and entry form available on [www.clivemcc.co.uk](http://www.clivemcc.co.uk)

## MARCH 2015

- 7 Rufforth Autojumble,**  
Rufforth Park, York YO23 3QH.  
[www.rufforthautojumble.com](http://www.rufforthautojumble.com)
- 8 'Normous Newark, Newark Showground,**  
Notts NG24 2NY.  
[www.newarkautojumble.co.uk](http://www.newarkautojumble.co.uk)
- 13 Classic Bike & Car Meet,**  
The Victoria, Coalville, Leics LE67 3FA. Tel 01530 814718.  
[www.vicbikerspub.co.uk](http://www.vicbikerspub.co.uk)
- 15 VMCC (Northampton) Pre Pioneer Run.**  
Midsummer Meadow,  
Northampton, 11am. Martin  
Laundon 01604 586144
- 21 Scorton Giant Auto/Bike Jumble,**  
North Yorkshire Events Centre  
DL10 6EH. Bert 07909 904705
- 22 Overland & Adventure Travel Bike Day,**  
Ace Cafe London NW10 7UD.  
[www.ace-cafe-london.com](http://www.ace-cafe-london.com)
- 27 Classic Bike & Car Meet,**  
The Victoria, Coalville, Leics LE67 3FA. Tel 01530 814718.  
[www.vicbikerspub.co.uk](http://www.vicbikerspub.co.uk)
- 28 LE Velo Northampton gathering,**  
The Chequers, Ravensthorpe  
NN6 8ER, noon.  
Tel 01604 499858
- 28-29 Manchester Bike Show 2015 (inc Northern Classic Bike Show),**  
EventCity (near the Trafford  
Centre), Manchester M41 7TB.  
Tel 01484 667776.  
[www.classicshows.org](http://www.classicshows.org)
- 28-29 Kickback - The National Custom Bike Show,**  
Stoneleigh Park, near Coventry,  
Warwickshire CV8 2LZ.  
[www.thecustomshow.com](http://www.thecustomshow.com)
- 31 Steve Parrish MAD Tour,**  
City Varieties, Leeds LS1 6LW.  
[www.madtour.co.uk](http://www.madtour.co.uk)

## About the route

This route takes the rider through the Pyrenees from the spa town of Ax-Les-Thermes to the French Catalonia port of Collioure.

Ax-Les-Thermes is well known for its sulphurous hot springs (25 to 77°C) of which there are around 60. These waters were used by the Romans and were developed in the medieval ages on the orders of Saint Louis to treat the soldiers returning from the Crusades with leprosy. The town now has three thermal spas plus a winter sports centre, so is popular all year round.

Collioure is the region of the Côte Vermeille, which means "vermillion coast". Collioure is part of a 20km stretch of beaches, small bays, creeks and coves. There are some fantastic walks and trails in this region, so well worth taking the time to explore.



The route blends great roads with great views.

## About the group

This route was produced by Ivan Taggart from the Triumph Owners' Motorcycle Club (TOMCC), which is organised on a National scale and on a local level through the branches which are throughout the country. There are many organised Branch events which work alongside the National organised events.

The club was founded in 1949 by a group of enthusiasts around South London and this was soon a major National One-Make Club which caters for all owners of Triumph Motorcycles; all are welcome. There is a monthly club magazine, which is called 'Nacelle' and this contains useful hints and tips for the members.

To find out more about membership and more about the club, click on [www.tomcc.org](http://www.tomcc.org) where you will find a wealth of information.

If you would like your group or event to appear in these pages, please email the details of the route you think our readers would be interested in and information about your group to: [jclements@mortons.co.uk](mailto:jclements@mortons.co.uk)



At the roundabout, take the second exit on to Route du Pla de las Fourques, go 650m then at the roundabout take the first exit on to D114 and travel 2.5km.



At the roundabout, take the second exit on to the D914 ramp to Le Boulou/Perpignan and travel for 260m. Then merge on to D914 and travel for 9.2km.



Take exit 8 towards Elne-Sud/Latour-Bas-Elne, go 800m then take a slight left on to D612. Follow D612 for 22.14km.



At the roundabout, take the second exit on to D615 and follow D615 for 9.8km.



Turn left on to D16 and travel 5.7km, then at the roundabout take the third exit on to N116 and travel 13.7km.



At the roundabout, take the third exit on to Route de Marquixantes/D916 and follow D916 for 2.5km.



Turn left on to Route nationale/N116 and follow N116 for 46.3kms.



Turn right on to Route de Llivia/D33 and travel for 2.3km.



Continue on to N-154 and follow N-154 for 5.15km.



At the roundabout, take the first exit on to D30 and go 1.8km.



Turn right on to Route d'Espagne/N20 and follow N20 for 41.2km.



Turn left on to D82, travel for 400km then turn left on to Rue Saint-Jérôme and go 130m.



Turn left to stay on Rue Saint-Jérôme and go 60m, take a slight right on to Place Roussel and travel for 52m.



Take the first left on to Rue Gaspard Astrie and destination will be 44m ahead.

**Total km travelled: 337km**





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# TOURING

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80

## Burma: The road to Mandalay

British motorcycle expedition specialist GlobeBusters has a reputation for pioneering and recently became the first travel company to lead a bike tour across Burma.

Once across the International Bridge of Friendship into Myanmar (Burma) a whole new world opened up.

Although the group was supposed to stay on a route that was approved by the government, local guides would point out small rural roads into the heart of the country, past tiny villages of wooden houses on stilts, where the people are delighted to see you, with large gentle smiles and wary curiosity about the bikes.

The road from the border to the ancient royal city of Mandalay in central Burma presented a new set of challenges. Unmaintained, the surface had worn away, exposing metal water pipes. The road twists and turns with extreme hairpins, muddy ruts and steep descents.

Fuel is mostly 92 octane and poor quality, which modern large capacity bikes struggle to burn efficiently. And even outside the wet season, there are occasional torrential downpours and humidity reaches 90% in the

jungle regions, leaving riders soaked to the skin.

But it's worth the effort; the scenery is stunning, especially the Karen Hills of eastern Burma, and the beautiful Buddhist temples. By the time they rode into Bangkok, Kevin and Julia from GlobeBusters and their four hand-picked fellow-travellers had covered 6000 miles in six weeks.

GlobeBusters specialise in amazing journeys to unusual destinations. Find out more at: [www.globebusters.com](http://www.globebusters.com)

## D-Day thunder

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84

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# Dead end roads

There are many great roads to ride in this world. So get out there and choose one.

WORDS: Richard Millington PHOTOGRAPHY: Mortons Archive

In the New Year many of us are planning our rides for the coming season and beyond. Most of us already have this year's rides planned, discussed with friends, pencilled in or even booked with a tour company.

For most of us our plans are normally limited by time and money. But where would you go if these limits were removed? If you had a blank piece of paper; what roads would be on your bucket list to ride?

For many people the instant answer is 'a round the world trip' which is great but where would you actually go? Emelio Scott spent 10 years and rode 500,000 miles and I bet there were some awesome (as in filled him with awe) and amazing rides he took in; but I'd also bet there were some dull days.

Search the internet and you can find umpteen lists of the best roads in the world to ride. Some dirt, some Tarmac. These lists are worth a read and some truly great roads will turn up again and again; the Transfagarasan Road, Romania, the Karakoram Highway in the Himalayas, the Stelvio Pass in the Alps and

Carretera Austral in Chile. You don't need me to create another bucket list of rides – the internet is out there.

But there are some roads you should plan to ride sooner rather than later as they are disappearing. You need to move up your bucket list any of the great dirt roads that you read about in those Internet lists. Thanks to the web they get known, they get more popular and a little bit of a tourist industry builds up around them. Initially this might be on a micro scale, but it steadily grows.

Suddenly some bright spark in a government office who previously had never even heard of Batopilas, or whichever little town is benefiting, notices and decides the best thing he can do is pave the road as this is bound to improve tourism. I am sure the locals and the coaches that may follow appreciate it, but for many bikers the appeal of the challenge, the remote nature and the sense of achievement is lost. Then again it takes 50 bikes to spend the same as one coach load.

A prime example of a lost road is the road to Batopilas in Copper Canyon, Mexico. Copper Canyon is deeper than the Grand Canyon and I first rode it in 2009. As you turn off the main road (I am using the word 'main' loosely) there was a few miles of Tarmac before the road turned to dirt. Nice road and great views and then you pass a roadside Catholic Shrine to Mary. If you have travelled in Mexico, or in many areas of South America, you will know there are often little shrines at sites where a loved one has died on the road, so it is always a bit of an indicator of the potential level of danger of the road.

A shrine to the 'mother' of the national religion could therefore be seen as a little worrying. Go around the next hairpin and your fears will be affirmed. The road is single track, dirt and rocks, with a sheer rock face on either side – one face goes up and one goes down, at least 100m either way. There are no guard rails. You are sharing the road with trucks and buses that cannot possibly make the never ending series of super tight hairpin turns, but somehow they do. It took hours to do the 85 miles, but it was one of the best and most memorable days of riding I've ever had.

A couple of years later I was fortunate enough to be back. Ready to relive this epic day; looking forward to the challenge; relishing renewing the acquaintance; I could already taste the cold beer at the end of the day. They were halfway through tarmacking it. Blasting out the rock face and trying to lay two lane blacktop on the side of a canyon face.

The surface was already bowing and cracking but they were determined to Tarmac the whole route. The old road is lost forever and that epic day is just a memory.

So if you want to ride the infamous Ruta 40 through the Patagonian Steppe in Argentina, or Carretera Austral down the spine of Chile, descend the Moki Dugway in Utah, wade through the mud of the Trans Labrador highway in Canada or any of the other iconic roads that you can find listed on the web then do so soon before they disappear under a layer of smooth black asphalt.

Don't get me wrong, there are many superb Tarmac roads to be ridden and you can get your biking fix on the Tarmac as easily as you can on dirt, but beware of the 'great' roads that are more hype than actuality, or at least not that great to ride.

The Blue Ridge Parkway twists and turns through Carolinas and Virginia and will expose you to some breathtaking views and scenery. If you have gone to ride the twists and turns though you'll be frustrated, as large sections of the road have a 35mph speed limit strictly enforced.

Route 66 is another example. It has achieved an iconic status with a supporting industry of tour operators, gift shops, sticker and patch manufacturers all on the band wagon. Route 66 was designed as a fast and efficient route from Chicago to Los Angeles cutting a diagonal route across the flat prairie lands of the central US.

It quickly became a truckers' favourite – flat, straight and cool. It was instrumental in allowing mass migration to the west in the depression and its notoriety grew from this. Officially it no longer exists but bits and pieces survived with new road numbers. They are easy to find as they all have a Route 66 gift shop full of tat at every stop.

It is a truck road across the plains, so why is this road at the top of so many bucket lists? The Great North Road, also known as the A1M, doesn't seem to have that same appeal, despite its many similarities to Route 66. It was our original trunk road connecting two ends of a country, used by people to get up and down our nation.

It's now often the second option to more favoured routes, which gives it a slightly more nostalgic feel, but it's still not something that I've craved to travel. But maybe you feel differently about it? And maybe you'd also choose to ride Route 66? Thankfully, just like the many routes on this planet, we're not all the same. So ride the routes you want to most.

## Meet Richard...



Richard Millington has been riding for more than 30 years and touring for over 25. His two-wheeled passion for travel kicked off in the 1980s, with a memorable first trip on which his Suzuki GSX1100EFE's exhaust set fire to his soft panniers. Since then, he's never looked back, fuelled by his involvement in the motor industry. Richard has turned his passion into a business, founding Motorrad Tours. He's ridden on five continents and guided motorcycle tours in Europe, Africa and North and South America. [www.motorrad-tours.com](http://www.motorrad-tours.com) offers a range of tours throughout Europe and around the world with something for every taste.



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## Suzuki DR-Z400

## TRAILIE TOURER

Simple Suzuki dual-purpose bike can go touring, with some provisos...

WORDS: Peter Henshaw PHOTOGRAPHY: Motons Media Archive

## LUGGAGE

We couldn't find any aluminium boxes to fit the DR-Z (unless you know different) but most owners seem happy with rolltop bags and soft panniers.

## SEAT

Ouch! The DR-Z wasn't designed for 400 mile days, and some owners liken the seat to a piece of four-by-two... 100 miles at a time is okay, and a sheepskin cover adds an hour of riding as well as bestowing overlander cred.

## FUEL TANK

A mere 10 litres, so even at 50-55mpg, the safe range isn't much more than 100 miles. Good news is that bigger aftermarket tanks are available.

## ALTERNATIVE

Unless you want a harder edged trailie, you'll probably have to go bigger - Yamaha XT660, Kawasaki KLR650. Or smaller - Honda's current CRF250 might be worth a look.



## CRASHABILITY

Owners often fit aftermarket bits to cut the cost of off-road tumbles - bash plates, radiator guards and the like. Well worth having if riding off-road. Plastics are cheap to replace though.

## WEIGHT

At 146kg fully fuelled, the DRZ is heavier than a KTM, so it's not as nimble off-road. But it's still no fatty by road bike standards, and slim enough to slip through traffic with ease.

## ENGINE

We're going back a generation. The four-valve single has a carburettor, not fuel injection, but it's a simple engine that's easy to service.

## BRAKES

The 250mm front disc and 220mm rear aren't eye-popping by road bike standards, but good enough.

**W**e know what you're thinking. Yes we do. What is a 400cc trail bike doing on the MSL Tourers page? Believe it or not, the Suzuki DR-Z really can do big trips, as long as they're of a certain sort.

Let's get what it can't comfortably do out of the way first. It's not a cossetting, comfy sort of machine, and holding more than 70mph is hard work, so high mileage

motorway days are out. And being relatively small, with just 39bhp, it will struggle two-up, unless you're content to do fewer miles at lower speeds.

On the other hand, for a solo rider looking to do a tour that includes some light off-roading, it could be ideal. It'll happily cruise at 60-70mph on Tarmac and does have enough grunt to carry luggage. Once you hit the trails, it is heavy by trailie standards, but still a nice forgiving bike off-road (we're talking tracks rather than trials sections). It's simple, dead reliable and you can pick up an early one for around £1500.

So, across Europe by autoroute, no. But, ferry to Santander, a few days trail riding in the Picos and/or Pyrenees, followed by a relaxed ride home on French D roads - sounds perfect.

## IN A NUTSHELL

Simple, cheapish dual-purpose trailie that will tackle touring

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# LAC LAP

A 120 mile loop in south-eastern France, taking in Reims circuit on the way there.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: Dick Underdown



**T**here are two ways of touring, to my mind. Some people like to be on the move every day, while others like to base themselves in one place and do day rides unencumbered by luggage. On this trip, I was lucky to have the best of both worlds.

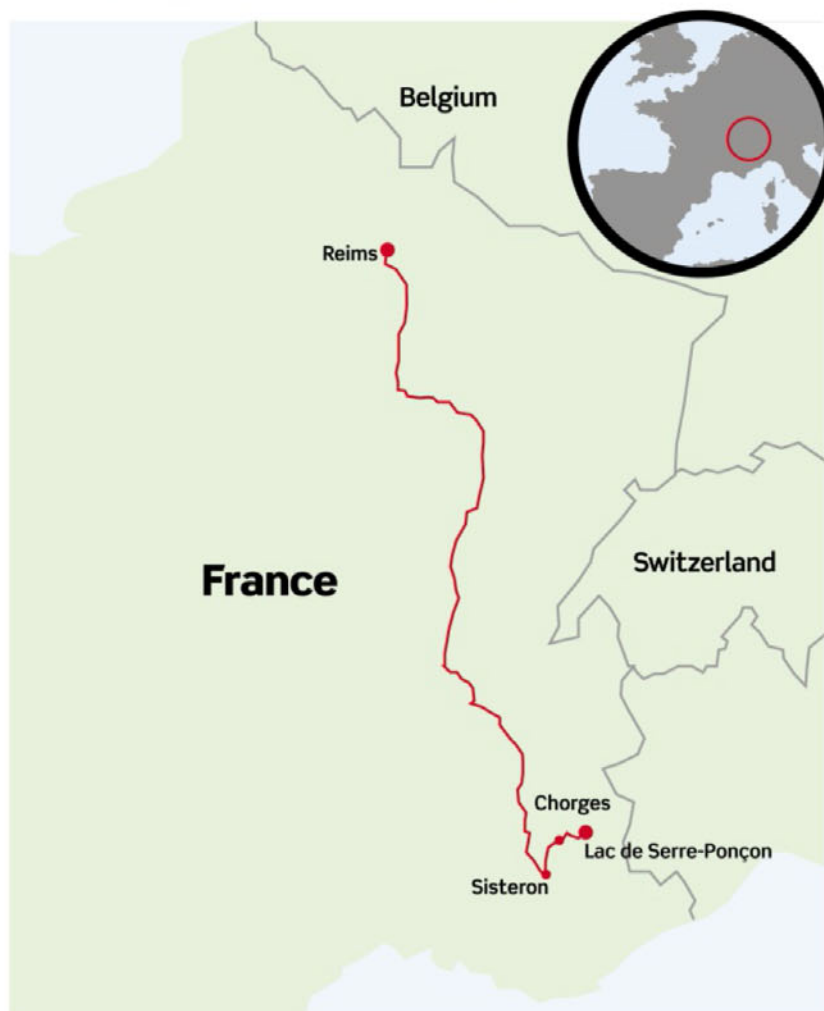
Two leisurely days meandering down through central France on scenic D-roads via overnight stops at Reims and Macon, followed by a lovely 120 mile loop from Sisteron. I would have enjoyed it even more if I'd remembered to remove my disc lock before leaving the hotel in Reims.

Fortunately my full tool kit included a number three hammer plus adjustable spanner, enough for a temporary repair lasting until back in the UK. Two new discs made it an expensive mistake, but at least I could keep riding.

Our high point in Reims was the historic 1926 racing circuit. Hard to imagine it, but Formula One and top level bike racing all took place here, only ending in 1969. It was a triangular road circuit with straights over 2km long giving the opportunity to approach 200mph, though in the mist on the day we visited, 60mph felt fast enough.

You can't follow the whole original circuit, but the old short circuit is still used for historic racing and the pits and main grandstand are very well preserved. They're a great monument to some wonderful racing, and the men that raced.

**ABOVE:** View from Sisteron's citadel.







## SISTERON LOOP

Sisteron is a citadel, sometimes referred to as the gateway to Provence. The fortified cathedral is at the end of a steep climb, overlooking the town and twisting River Durance below, and it's a photographer's dream. The town was first inhabited about 4000 years ago, and has survived an interesting and varied history, right up until the Second World War when the citadel and bridges spanning the river were both bombed.

After a day stretching legs around the town, we were all ready for a day ride. Fresh coffee and rolls got things off to a great start before we wheeled the bikes out into 20°C heat. Fantastic for September.

When touring in a large group it's natural for different people to ride in different ways, and we've learnt to split up for the day before reconvening in the evening to discuss the day over a meal and beer or two. This seems to suit most people and avoids anyone becoming frustrated.

So while some of the sports tourers took off on their own route, I did a 120 mile loop around the Lac de Serre-Ponçon, sandwiched between mountains, fed by the River Durance and ultra scenic. Filtering is illegal in France, but we followed the locals' lead (literally) and made our way out of town across the river, before leaving all traffic and joining the D951.

This is an undulating ribbon of single track, writhing along the valley floor and requiring complete concentration, which is impossible when the mountains keep demanding your attention. One of my companions said it reminded him of his native Scotland, but better – no midges or rain! My Transalp's suspension was swallowing the undulating surface, but I could see Ali on his Blackbird having a difficult time staying in the seat. Less is more, maybe.

Every third village or so had a tavern, and eventually we stopped for a coffee. French is essential but I remembered enough from school to get the drinks right. It's worth noting we hadn't seen one car since peeling off the main road, just the odd errant sheep.

Turning right onto the D900B, we followed the



**TOP LEFT:** Reims hasn't seen modern racing for over 40 years, but the pits are well preserved.

**TOP RIGHT:** Posing at Reims.

**ABOVE:** N94 crosses the lake.

**BELOW:** Pause between magnificent church and half-timbered town hall

shoreline. The weather gods were spoiling us and the blue mirror of water on our right gave a dazzling counterpoint to the surrounding peaks. We turned away from the lake, heading up the Tour de France route towards Chorges, painted slogans on the road still present from the biggest cycle race in the world.

It's steep, and I was crawling up in second – can't imagine how Chris Froome and co pedalled up here. Meanwhile, the drop to my right was a bit too close for comfort when the odd car coming the other way forced us to get near to the unprotected edge.

A pause at the top for pictures and a drink. We knew we'd picked the right place when a convoy of cars pulled in for the same purpose. Down the other side steadily we rounded the top on the N94 and followed the D954 to Savines-le-Lac. A great restaurant with a much needed sun canopy looked good and dictated a stop for lunch. Tremendous views.

As we ate, it steadily filled up and I was glad we stopped just a bit earlier than the recognised meal time. It's a common ploy we use to avoid the queues, hopefully also allowing clearer roads when we've eaten our fill...

But this time, it didn't work, and we ended up sharing the D954 with lots of bike riding locals. It was obvious they were familiar with the roads, slicing past us and enjoying themselves, pillions hanging on for dear life, all adding to an entertaining afternoon's viewing from my own more leisurely perch.

Originally I'd planned to follow the D7 down to Digne, but the roads were really filling with the four-wheeled fraternity now. I suppose you can't expect to have it all to yourself but I don't want the lumbering company clogging up the road ahead and spoiling the vista. A quick pit stop and we decided to cut across to our original route north on the single track, D900B to D951 and we were on our own again. Bliss.

I don't think Ali agreed, and he looked relieved to stretch his back when we got back to the hotel. It's been a 120 mile loop taking a relaxed five to six hours with stops, and a great day's ride. A different choice to the spectacular N85 that is most people's first thought when coming to this region. Best bet is to do both.





 **Mid Ride**

# LIBERATION WEEKENDER

Two days is all you need to visit the D-Day beaches

WORDS: Robert Lye PHOTOGRAPHY: Robert Lye, [www.calvados-tourisme.fr](http://www.calvados-tourisme.fr) and Memorial de Caen



**War debris still on the beach at Asnelles.**

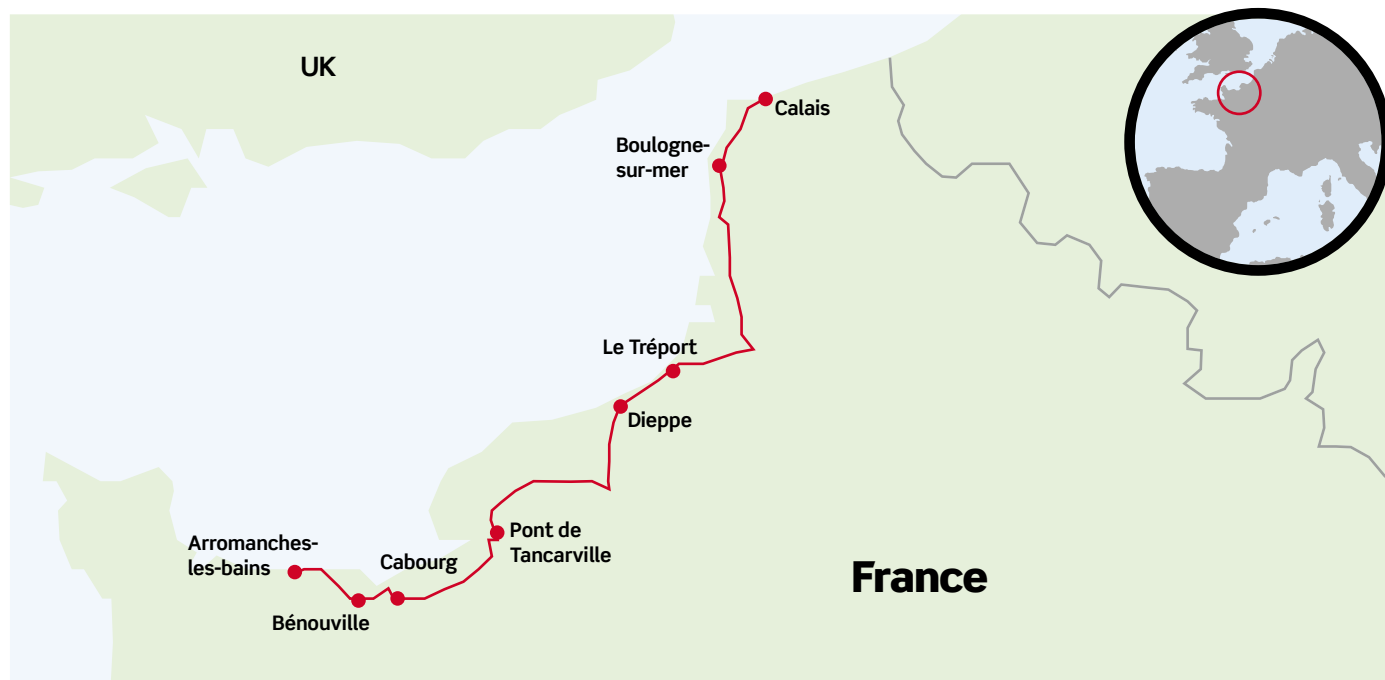
I was moaning to my wife, friends and anyone else who would listen that I only use my Harley Superglide for commuting and attending the odd meeting for work. Our lass has no interest in becoming a pillion, and I never (the moan continued) seem to use the bike just for pleasure. “Well, why don’t you then?” she replied.

I didn’t need any more of a push than that, phoned one of my oldest mates and was pleasantly surprised when he agreed to a weekend in France. I left straight from work one Friday, and had been riding for about 10 minutes when a nagging thought came into my head. Then my mobile rang: “Hey Rob, you’ve left your passport in the office!”

Otherwise, the 200 mile ride from Yorkshire down to my sister’s house (oldest mate Steve is married to her) was uneventful. The final 65 miles down to Dover was easy too, as was boarding the ferry and finding the restaurant. By the time we had polished off a greasy fry-up, we were docking at Calais and the sun was out to greet us.

## WEST TO THE BEACHES

Off the ferry, we used the motorway to get clear of Calais and its associated daytrip holidaymakers, coming off at Boulogne and then sticking to D roads, following roads we knew to Abbeyville before heading coastward on the D940 to Le Treport. Finally, we joined the D925, not-







quite-coast road which took us to Le Havre via Dieppe, Fecamp and all the smaller villages in between.

This gave great views as it opened up along the coast, despite usually being a couple of clicks from the sea, and was ideal for the speeds we were content to ride at. Although my bike is fitted with a Garmin Zumo 660, I have never really bothered to work all the options out so we were programming in the next town and then working out how to bypass it when we got there.

Maybe not the most practical method, but a lot of fun trying to guess directions and road signs, and feeling really cocky when we emerged on the other side. Or not so cocky when we found ourselves in a town centre dead end.

After crossing the Seine via the older, but no less spectacular, bridge at the Pont De Tancarville, we meandered back towards the coast again in the general direction of Deauville. Although it was quite busy

**TOP LEFT:** Bikes were on holiday too – both normally get used for commuting.

**TOP RIGHT:** Arromanches on a calm Sunday morning, with D-Day remains.

**ABOVE LEFT:** Handy stop-to-read-map lane on French road.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** American Cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer.

**BELOW:** Quite apart from the fighting, D-Day was a miracle of logistics.

here we stayed away from the coast road, missing most of the main crowds. We stopped for lunch at one of the many cafes and parked on the pavement, which bothered no one.

After lunch we continued along the D513 to Cabourg before heading inland to the first bridge across the river at Benouville. This is none other than Pegasus Bridge, well known to anyone with the slightest interest in the Second World War, as it was the first place to be liberated on June 6, 1944.

The original cafe is still there and open although the actual bridge was replaced a number of years ago and now resides in grounds of the nearby museum. There's a lot to see in the museum and cafe, and you can marvel at the skill of the glider pilots who landed here in the dark, bang on target – the closest glider was just 50m from the bridge.

This really is D-Day country, and as we followed the coast road to Arromanches, with glimpses of the sea, we passed some of the many memorials that dot this part of France. We'd booked a B&B in Arromanches run by expats Adrian and Karen, and if you really want to play it safe, one of the bars in town is done up like an English pub.

## The D-Day Experience

All right, the 70th anniversary has been and gone, but the D-Day landing sites still make for a fascinating experience. We all know the story, but there's no substitute for seeing the beaches, the towns and surrounding countryside to get a sense of the scale of Europe's biggest ever invasion and appreciate the human cost.

There are countless sights, but highlights are probably Bayeux Museum, which has lots of D-Day material, the Memorial de Caen which tells the whole story and more recently the Arromanches 360 cinema, which shows high definition archive footage

of the landings and subsequent Battle of Normandy.

Outside the museums, look for remains of the famous Mulberry harbours or just walk along the beaches at low tide and have a think about it all.

Three ferry companies – Brittany, Condor and P&O – offer sailings, and Brittany does a package deal including return ferry and three nights B&B, at about £200 for two people on one bike.

[www.normandie-tourisme.fr](http://www.normandie-tourisme.fr)  
[www.brittany-ferries.co.uk](http://www.brittany-ferries.co.uk)  
[www.condorferries.co.uk](http://www.condorferries.co.uk)  
[www.pofferries.com](http://www.pofferries.com)







As this was a quick trip, we had to head straight back to Calais next day but decided to take a more inland route once past Caen, following the D675 across to Rouen, stopping a couple of times at small cafes for a drink and a baguette. This D-road is a traditional French route, passing through many small towns and villages and with hardly any traffic, most of which tends to use the A13 autoroute. It's a good compromise between making progress and enjoying the ride.

We bypassed Rouen, (not sure how exactly), and popped out the other side following the D928 up to Abbeville. Again, a parallel autoroute was taking the brunt of the traffic, and we stayed on this one to Abbeville, then back onto the coast road up to Calais via Le Touquet and Boulogne, arriving in time for a quick drink before our 6 o'clock ferry. Two hours after leaving France we were having a cuppa at my sister's and at 12.30am I was home in Yorkshire, ready for work next day.

It was a good trip, showing that you don't need more than a couple of days away to experience France. I rode 1150 miles in all, and Steve (1979 Honda CB750) did about 750. Neither of us took anything other than spare clothes. I've got breakdown cover, but neither bike missed a beat, they were comfortable up to the speed limits and returned low-mid 50s mpg.

So if you haven't ridden abroad before, give it a go. In our experience, you don't need to embark on a major tour or a ride of huge distances to experience something new.

**ABOVE:** Biggest queue was for the ferry home.

**RIGHT:** Pretty villages are within sight of the sea.

**BELOW:** Pegasus Bridge, where the first D-Day troops landed.

**BOTTOM:** Pavement parking is allowed in France, as long as you don't get in the way.

## Which ferry?

Robert and Steve did Dover-Calais, but if you live further west, then Poole or Portsmouth to Cherbourg, Caen or Le Havre probably make more sense. They are longer crossings which cost more, but if you want to see the D-Day sites, they will save you miles on both sides of the Channel.



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We'll need a selection of nice high-resolution pictures to go with the words, at least 1Mb each. When your story is published, you'll receive a free 12 month subscription to *MSL*.

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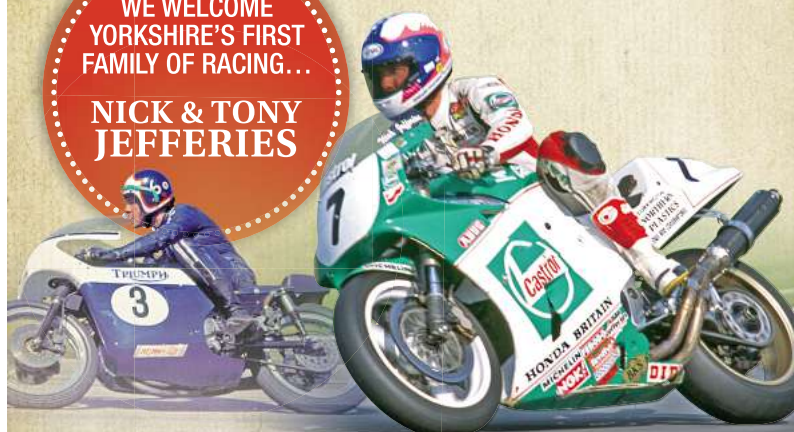
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# INDELIBLE INCA

Last month, we left David McMillan halfway through his first big overseas trip, through Chile and Peru. Here's what happened next...

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: David McMillan

**PART**  
**2**

**S**ailing up the Tambopata River, we saw turtles and two coypus on the banks, as well as a small cayman. So small, it was more of a cayboy, and I told tour leader Frank that we had bigger newts than that back home, but he pretended not to understand.

The accommodation at Cayman Lodge was very basic, but after hearing about the bushmaster snake, I was grateful for anything more substantial than a tent. The southern night sky meanwhile, away from all light pollution, was simply stunning, while fireflies darted between the trees and the jungle cacophony continued into the night.

Although the forest here is what's known as 'secondary', that is, regrowth following logging, there are countless botanical species. The gigantic ironwood tree can be up to 70m tall and take a millennium to reach maturity. Frank showed us how one plant's leaves exude a purple dye when rolled in the fingers.

He pointed out plants which can save your life by giving you an extra hour before snake venom takes hold fully, and very similar looking plants whose toxin can kill. Even a plant for the chap with problems in the 'gentleman's region' – its name translates as 'awaken sleepy log plant,' so no further explanation is necessary.

Frank even netted a piranha for us, with the aid of some garden twine and a small piece of raw chicken. The technique seems to be to thrash the bait around in the water to impersonate a chicken in distress – it worked, and soon Frank was holding one of the toothy little fish in his hand. Even held out of the water and gasping for air, the little devil would still bite at anything which came within 6in of his tiny but razor-sharp teeth.

In fact Frank had a small hole in his hand from a previous encounter. After the perfunctory photos were taken, the fish was released back into the muddy waters, and I vowed to wait until I got back to the North Sea before going swimming again – it's cold, but safe.

## HORROR TO HEAVEN

After a flight back to Cusco, it was time get back on the bikes and head south. One of the group had a spill when another bike had to brake sharply in front of him – the GS1200's oil cooler split and poor Jurgen spent the rest of the trip on the truck, along with his damaged bike. The group rode on, and then suddenly, without warning, we came face to face with Dante's Inferno.

If any Hollywood director is looking to set a movie in hell, he could save a fortune on scenery and film in

Juliaca. This is less a town, more a vision of some dystopian underworld, with scrap metal and trash piled high on the pavements, and an all-pervading stench. The road surface consists of broken Tarmac, gravel and dried mud – with ungated railway crossings adding a bit of spice, plus chaotic drivers everywhere.

The group rode tight here, surviving the cross-town journey like a pack of wolves. It was a surprise to find that there are corners of Peru as bad as anywhere in Africa, and Christian said that only Luanda, the capital of Angola, compared to what we had just witnessed. The newly-dead corpses of dogs lay beside the road in many places, hit by the traffic – unclaimed, unburied, unloved.

After the horror of Juliaca, I was expecting Lake Titicaca to be a let-down. We found our hotel right on the lakeside in the town of Puno, which nestles on the west bank of what is the world's highest navigable lake. After a very early breakfast, our intrepid group boarded a small motorboat and set off across the flat water, following a channel between the reed beds.

The light up here is superb, a photographer's dream, the thin air allowing the early morning sunlight to illuminate the amazing sight of floating islands. These are actually manmade, homes of the Uros people, and built originally for defence. Around 20 minutes after setting off, we pulled alongside one of them, and stepped

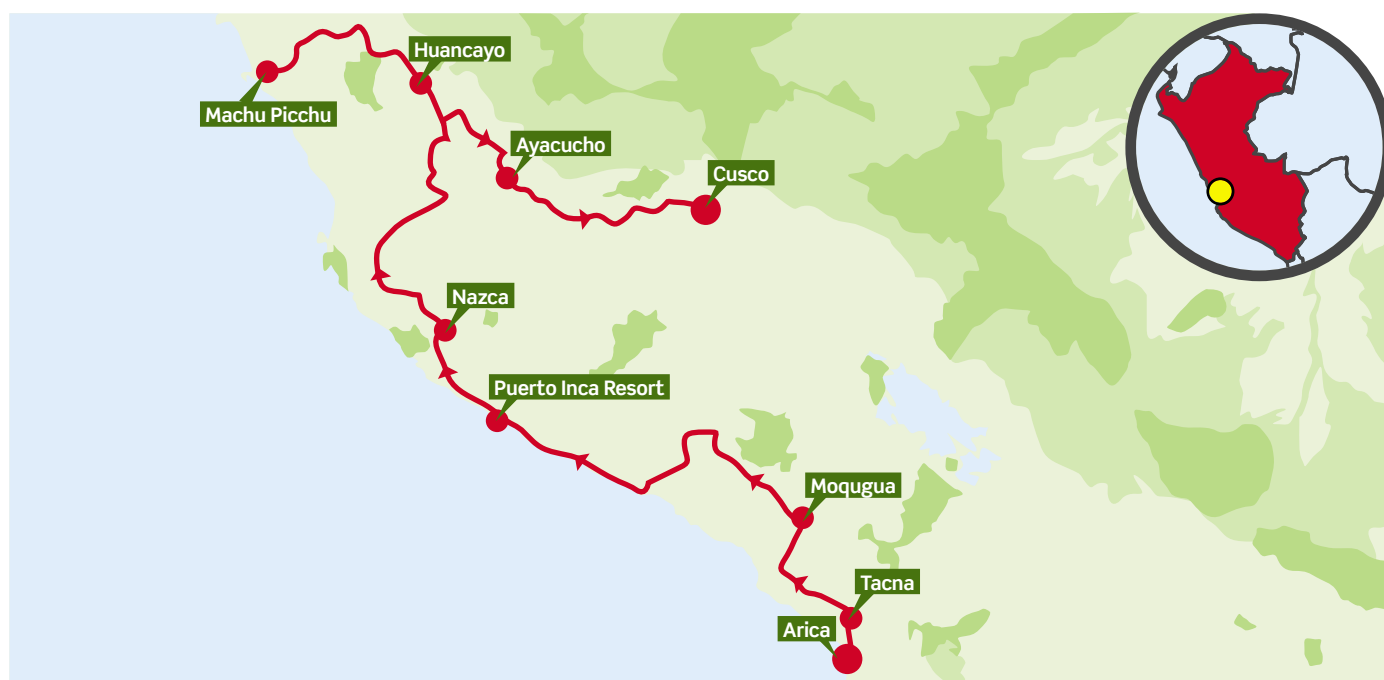


**ABOVE:** Mountains peaked at around 18,000ft.

**BELOW:** Most riders paid the extra for a 1200GS.







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Roads were often deserted. Like riding through Mars.



Lake Titicaca. Like the place, love the name. Idyllic springs to mind.

## Any complaints?

We all had the opportunity to comment on how this tour was run, and some felt that the daily ride briefings were too heavily biased towards the German speakers, and that the route instructions could have been better.

Others thought that sometimes one of the guides winged it when asked something he didn't know. And equipping every rider with a cheap mobile phone would have helped when anyone got lost, as happened on leaving the chaotic suburbs of Arequipa, causing a two-hour delay.

Some of our group had taken other Edelweiss tours and felt that this one didn't have the content to match its premium price – a solo rider on a G650GS, sharing a room, pays €6270. Some small items, like the entrance fee to a national park, were extra – it wouldn't have put much of a dent in the company's margin if covered by the tour price.

I guess that for the same money you could take several lesser holidays, or score huge brownie points by treating the missus to a new kitchen. But when you look back on your life, you won't remember those.

ashore on to what felt like a huge soggy mattress. The Uros people made us feel very welcome, and our guide Felice explained how the islands are created by sawing out sections through the thick clumps of reed bed roots, tying them together and then covering them with freshly cut reeds in a criss-cross pattern, before the whole lot is anchored by strong ropes tied to wooden eucalyptus stakes driven into the lake bed. There are 80 or so of these islands, housing about 2000 people.

The islands need constant maintenance to build up the dry reed top surface, but even so have a finite life, after which they are abandoned to the lake when a new island is cut and prepared for the two dozen or so inhabitants.

The clothes they wore were beautiful, brightly coloured wool, and the women were mainly barefoot, with an unusual way of walking across the reeds, a sort of long loping cross between strolling and jogging. I had to buy a souvenir, a brightly coloured spread, hoping that my small contribution would help preserve this very unique way of life. And yes, the Uros really do live like this – they don't fire up the inflatable as soon as the tourists leave and head back to a housing estate in Puno, although the one concession they do make to the modern world is television, powered by a small solar panel.

The following day saw us ride towards the national park around Chivay and stop at a mirador to admire the volcanoes high on the Altiplano. At this point we hit 16,122ft, according to the gizmo on David's GS, and pockets of snow lay by the roadside.

The air was incredibly thin now, and one of the German participants, Kurt, was starting to suffer breathing difficulties. As was my bike. At sea level, the 650cc Sertao's power delivery isn't much to write home about. At 14,000ft on the Altiplano, it feels like a one-lunged asthmatic with emphysema.

I lost count of the number of times I crawled past a



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bus climbing a mountain pass, only to find a 30-ton truck bearing down on me from the other direction. The Sertao would be on full throttle making a ridiculous 'plock plock' induction noise, with kids on the bus pointing and laughing at el hombre loco.

From Chivay, we visited the Colca Canyon and were lucky enough to see about half a dozen condors. They really were magnificent, either scouring the river's banks hundreds of metres below us, or wheeling overhead, using their finger-tip feathers for brilliant control, and no doubt wondering what all the cameras were for. I could see how the Incas believed that the condor carries the souls of the dead to the next world.

**ABOVE:** Fertile valley nestling between the desert pines.

**BELOW:** Main square at Arequipa.

## GOODBYES

The final day saw us make the long ride back to the border, where formalities took a little less time than crossing into Peru had, and we returned to Arica and the El Paso Park for a group dinner and to sign the bikes back. The dinner was fun but tinged with sadness that our great adventure was over.

Phone numbers and addresses were exchanged, but it was amusing to see how the large group had formed natural cliques over the tour. Team Austria, in their matching orange and black KTM kit, always had to be out in front. Klaus, with his years of enduro adventure experience, always chose to ride alone.

A bunch of the Swiss guys treated the tour like a Gumball Rally, fighter piloting their big GSs at every opportunity. For my part, I was grateful for the companionship of Christian and Monica from Houston, and of David and Linda from Minneapolis, all very warm, generous and special people. I knew I'd miss them all.

But most of all, for me this truly was an adventure. The fog on the Pan-American was close to hell. Riding alone in the Andes was close to heaven. Peru offers huge contrasts – the Amazonas could almost have been the Congo, while the Altiplano and Lake Titicaca would not seem out of place in Iceland. Tour operator Edelweiss did a great job overall, and have given me the most memorable fortnight of my life. It was unforgettable, and who can put a price on that?

## Want to go?

Edelweiss runs all sorts of bike tours all over the world, and the next available dates for the Chile/Peru jaunt are May 9-23 and August 7-21, 2015. [www.edelweissbike.com](http://www.edelweissbike.com)



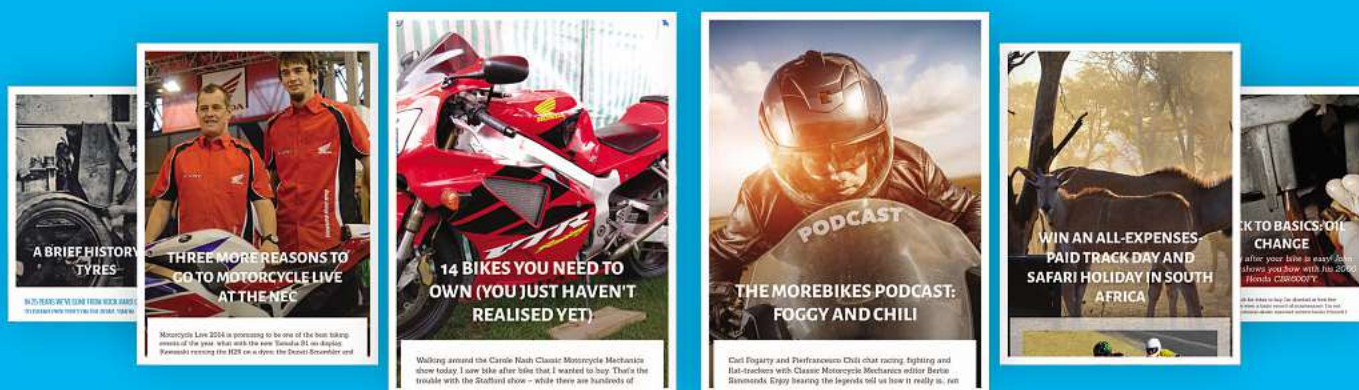


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## Rider wanted for dream job

Huge expenses paid trip, 25,000 euro and you get to keep a new Harley – plus you'll be riding around Europe. Get yer applications in!

**H**arley-Davidson has launched a European wide search to find one passionate motorcycle rider, who is willing to take on a two-month expenses-paid trip through Europe, aboard a Street Glide motorcycle.

The chosen adventurer will be paid €25,000 and get to keep the bike as well as a collection of great memories from the experience.

It may sound like a dream, but this is a real job offer from iconic motorcycle manufacturer, Harley-Davidson, as it launches the 'Discover More' initiative, set to be headed up by one chosen

motorcycle adventurer who will embark on the greatest ride of their life.

Starting this summer, the lucky winner will be required to plan and star in their own road trip adventure, travelling through more than 20 European countries, seeking out the best riding roads and sharing their experiences through social media and a dedicated website.

After a month of preparation and planning, the lucky rider – accompanied every step of the way by a dedicated professional film crew – will travel for two months to document this amazing riding experience.

The chosen rider will start the trip in May 2015. All candidates are encouraged to apply at [www.h-d.com/riderwanted](http://www.h-d.com/riderwanted) and explain why they should be the rider to take on this incredible journey. Closing date for applications is Friday, March 20, 2015.

The chosen rider will be announced in April, and the planning for this once-in-a-lifetime road trip can then begin.

Prospective riders must be aged 21 or over, have a valid European Union passport and have held a full manual motorcycle driving licence for at least three years.

For more information visit: [www.h-d.com/riderwanted](http://www.h-d.com/riderwanted)



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## Spotting the fakes

Counterfeit gear and how not to have it



98

## Buyer's Guide

Triumph's brilliant 2006 Bonnie



104

## Reflections: H2

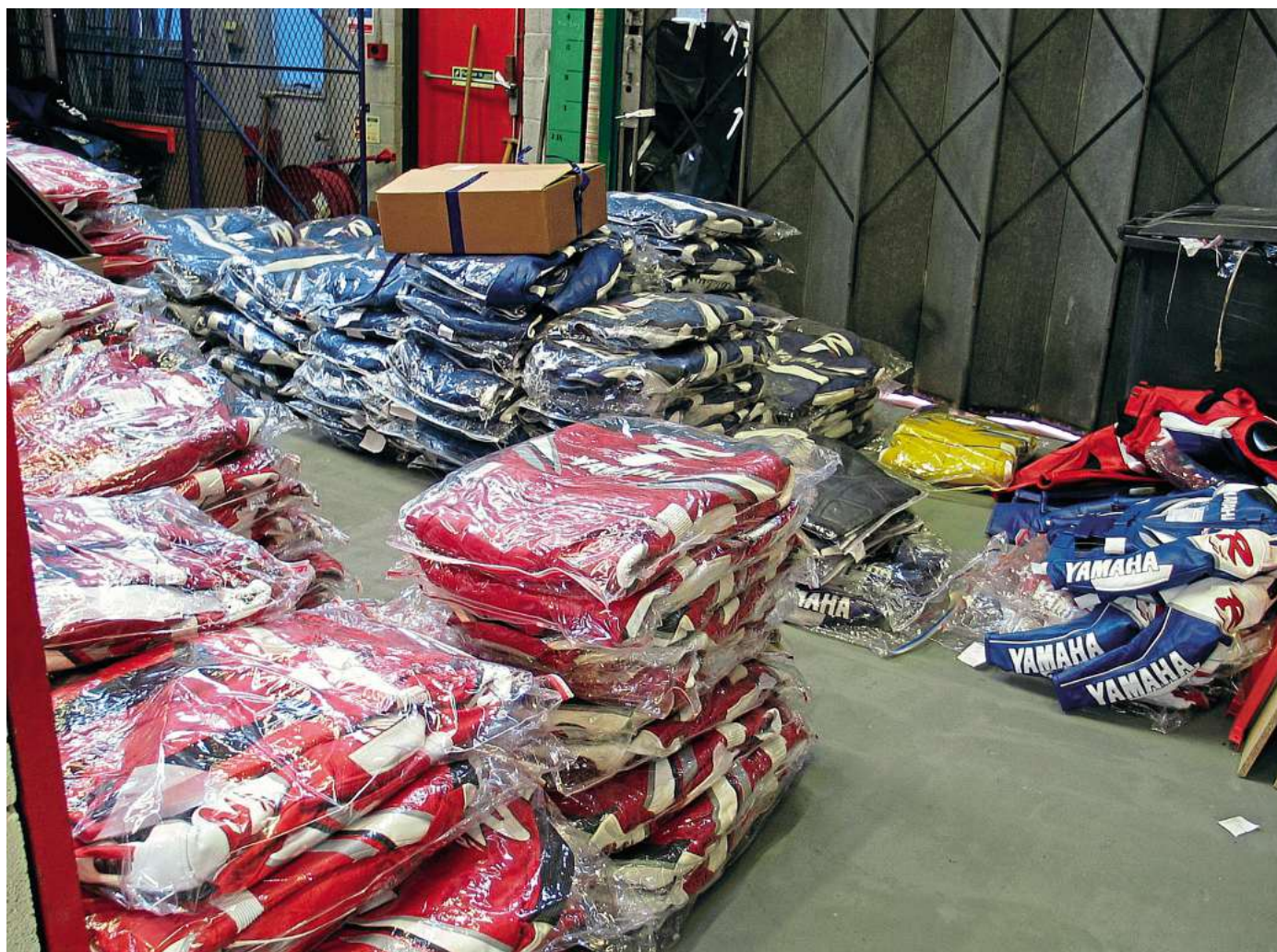
Kawasaki's original 750 bad boy



# DON'T BE CAUGHT OUT BY COUNTERFEIT GEAR

Where did you buy your bike gear from? Reckon it's legitimate?  
You might want to double check that...

**WORDS:** Carli-Ann Smith **PHOTOGRAPHY:** South Tyneside Trading Standards/Shields Gazette





## What is PIPCU?

The Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) is a specialist police unit with a national remit dedicated to protecting the UK industries that produce legitimate, high quality, physical goods and online and digital content from intellectual property crime.

The unit is operationally independent and was launched

in September 2013 with £2.56 million funding from the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) until June 2015. It was announced in October 2014, that PIPCU will receive a further £3 million from the IPO to fund the unit up to 2017.

The unit is dedicated to tackling serious and organised intellectual property crime –

counterfeit and piracy – affecting physical and digital goods (with the exception of pharmaceutical goods) with a focus on offences committed using an online platform.

The unit is a 20-strong team, consisting of detectives, analysts and researchers and is based within the Economic Crime Directorate of the City of London

Police, the National Lead Force for Fraud. Here it is drawing on the expertise and experience already in place that is leading the national law enforcement response to economic crime.

It is also running independently funded police units tackling insurance fraud, corruption and bribery and card payment fraud.

**O**ften found online and at markets, criminals selling counterfeit goods are often aware of the consequences of their actions and for this reason purposefully try to stay under the radar and not raise the suspicions of law enforcement or members of the public.

The internet is a major facilitator of IP crime – social media offers a great platform for showcasing the ‘fake’ goods on sale. Previously, the agencies focused on online auctions and websites, but recently there has been a significant shift to social media. As well as the obvious goods such as alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco proving popular for the counterfeiters, riding gear and motorcycle parts have been targeted by some trying to make quick cash. Whether it’s a brand new helmet that you’re buying online, or a riding jacket that you’ve found for a bargain price at a local market – beware, as it might not be what it claims.

Darren Dickenson from Wimbledon spoke to us after his neighbour’s grandson unwittingly bought a fake helmet.

“He bought the helmet online, thinking that it was a genuine AGV helmet. He’s only just started riding so was looking to get a good deal. It looked great in all the pictures and cost just £45. When it arrived and we had the chance to look at it closely, we realised that the quality was poor and there was no way that this was a genuine AGV. I certainly wouldn’t fancy my chances after an off!”

Steve Horsley from Peterborough Trading Standards said: “Counterfeit goods will not be made to the same safety

standards and quality as the genuine product. It might be an exact cosmetic copy but may not perform as the genuine product was intended to. They may carry markings – such as CE approval – but the likelihood is that they will not have gone through the process of safety and quality tests.”

But what kind of thing should you look for? We spoke to the Head of the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) at the City of London Police, DCI Danny Medlycott, who gave us his top tips on how not to be fooled:

### 1. BE AWARE OF THE DANGERS

“When shopping online, consumers need to be vigilant that they are not misled into buying counterfeits. Many websites purport to be selling genuine items, but in fact they are just cheap and shoddy imitations, which in some cases can be extremely dangerous as they do not go through vigorous safety checks.

### 2. BEWARE OF ACCESSING DODGY WEBSITES

“Many people are also not aware that by accessing these sites they may be exposing their computers to harmful malware and viruses, and even putting their personal and financial information at risk of being compromised.

### 3. DO YOUR RESEARCH

“We would advise anyone shopping online to research the site they are considering buying from. Check online to see what other people are saying about the website as many people will often turn to forums and blogs to warn

others of fake sites. Also look at the spelling and grammar used; often the people behind these sites do not pay a lot of attention or care to this detail. You should also look at the contact us section; if there is no physical address or working telephone number, you should be wary.

### 4. “IF IT LOOKS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

...then it probably is; heavily discounted products are often a telltale sign.” If you do fall victim to counterfeit fraud report it to: [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or call them on: 0300 123 2040.



**ABOVE:** DCI Danny Medlycott.

**BELOW:** They look real, don't they? They're not, apparently.



## What is IP crime?

According to the 2013/2014 IP crime report, IP crime is the ‘wilful use of someone else’s trademark or copyrighted work without the proper authorisation to do so’.

There are two categories:

- Trademark infringement – aka counterfeiting – where a person produces a product and claims it’s been made by the genuine manufacturer or trade mark owner. For it to be

a counterfeit it must have the trademark on the product.

- Copyright infringement – aka piracy – refers to when copyrighted work such as music is taken and made available for others to use without the permission of the copyright holder.

Each is classed as a criminal offence and comes with a maximum sentence of up to 10 years in prison.



# NORWAY: HEAVEN ON EARTH

Often overlooked, Norway is a motorcycling touring Mecca. And it's really not that far away.

WORDS: Alan Cathcart PHOTOGRAPHY: Svein Berli



**F**or many this little known nation is a country of clichés – fjords, Vikings, trolls, glaciers, The Scream, oil, the midnight sun, fish and not much else. Perhaps that's why its 94,000km of well-made, well-maintained but largely deserted paved roads lined with

majestic scenery full of natural drama seem to have become Europe's best kept secret for real-world riders.

Indeed, the cancellation of the Newcastle-Bergen ferry service in 2008, which had operated for well over a century, means you can no longer go there directly today from the UK with a bike. In fact, the shutdown last September of the Harwich-Esbjerg service means there's unfortunately no longer even a ferry route between the UK and Denmark, so getting to Norway is indeed quite a haul.

But believe me, it's worth it, as a week-long taster of a trip last June amply proved. My mate Svein Berli is a bike journalist like me, and had been trying to convince me for indecently long to come touring in Norway with him. I eventually succumbed, only to spend a week-long taster of a trip wondering why it had taken me so long to get there, as Svein led me round the southwest corner of the country on his R1200GS.

You never tire of viewing the endless array of ancient glaciers interspersed with waterfalls cascading from dramatic rock spires, or the craggy cliffs looming over the salt water fjords running deep into fissures and lined by near-vertical rock walls, let alone riding between snow banks 10ft high that never melt. This is Mother Nature at her most spectacular and impressive.

Our trip began in Stavanger, the Houston of Norway and capital of its oil industry, though in best Norwegian fashion there's no obvious trace of the fabulous wealth that its low-rise buildings generate thanks to the black gold pumped offshore from the nearby Atlantic Ocean's seabed.

Unable to spare the time to ride there from the UK, I flew in to find that Svein had arranged the loan of a 2014 BMW R1200RT complete with side panniers from his mate Owe Rovik, the owner of Bikerstreet [www.motorhuset.no](http://www.motorhuset.no) in Sandnes, a well-heeled dormitory town 20km from Stavanger. The country's largest bike dealer, Bikerstreet is a dealer for BMW (No.1 in Norwegian bike sales), Harley-Davidson (No. 2), Yamaha (No. 3) and Triumph (No. 7 and rising).

Depending on availability, Owe's open to renting bikes to visitors: contact him on [owe@bikerstreet.no](mailto:owe@bikerstreet.no) There are 250,000 registered

**ABOVE:** If you like views like this, head to Norway.

**RIGHT:** Alan's impressive route covered a good chunk of Norway.





motorcycles in Norway, or one for every 20 inhabitants, but as these are now mainly used for leisure rather than transport, there's effectively only a six month riding season owing to weather.

Our first night was a short ride away at the historic Kronen Gaard Hotel [www.kronen-gaard.no](http://www.kronen-gaard.no), built in 1898 as a summer residence by timber merchant Gabriel Block and lined with beech trees that must look spectacular in autumn. Speaking of seasons, June is by some way the best month to visit Norway, according to Svein – winter chills are but a memory, and the weather is more likely to be dry and sunny rather than wet. And as I found for myself insect repellent isn't required then, although it apparently most definitely is in August, when it also rains quite a bit.

July is Norwegians' holiday month, so best avoided as everywhere is jammed up, including the roads and worst of all, ferries – two-hour queues to get even a short crossing are commonplace. And being so far north the weather starts to turn colder already in September.

It was only after I'd spotted the first two or three that I started counting them, but on our five-day ride I saw no fewer than 137 expensive US-made Tesla electric four-door sedans – more than you ever see even in its San Francisco back yard. Turns out that 29% of new cars –





but not yet bikes – registered last year in Norway were electric or hybrid, thanks to huge subsidies that make a Tesla barely any dearer than a 3 Series BMW.

Plus you get free road tax, free road tolls, free charging in any of Norway's copious charging stations, and you can also use the bus lanes – though it seems pretty churlish to stop at a petrol station of all places, and park your Tesla right next to the only petrol pump for 50km while you go inside and eat lunch. Yes, really.

This bureaucratic munificence extends to motorcycles, which also pay no tolls to use the highways in Norway, which are otherwise stingingly expensive for private cars. But motorcycles have to abide by the rigorously enforced and pretty low speed limits – 100kph is the fastest you can go on the relatively few freeways, and there are long stretches of 80kph limits on deserted two-lane roads.

The upside of this is that Norway has the lowest motorcycle accident rate of any developed country, plus when you ride more slowly you do have more time to admire the breathtaking scenery.

But one thing that's hard to get used to quickly is that outside major cities like Oslo and Bergen, there is no cafe or bar culture in Norway in the evenings. All mid-sized towns and villages are locked down from 4.30pm onwards when most Norwegians get home from work – there's no pub for them to congregate with their mates in. So if you want to stop for a lunchtime snack you have to find a cafe – though they're few and far between – that can serve you something until around 3pm, when they all close, and anyway you can't get alcohol in them.

Partly that's because of the cost – at £7.50 per 0.4 litre glass of the local rather watery beer named Ryfylke, this is pricey even by Norwegian standards – and partly because there's essentially a zero tolerance when it comes to drink driving.

With a .003 blood alcohol level ceiling, a single glass of wine will put you over the limit, punishable by a minimum 21 days in jail and one year loss of your licence. After that hour, it's a case of either going to a petrol station for a snack outside a bigger city, or else a hotel.

Finding a Dutch tour bus party monopolising our Sand hotel's restaurant, to the point they'd run out of many dishes, we went out looking for a cafe at 7pm at night, and found nothing in a village of 1200 people.



**ABOVE:** Bus stops are a little different to the ones back home.

**BELOW:** Rome is closer to Oslo than the North Cape.

Being Saturday night, some locals had set up an impromptu bar in the loading bay of a transport company, selling beer and soft drinks – but no food.

It was a case of back to the hotel and whatever the Dutch had left for us – which turned out to be some freshly caught fish that had just arrived while we'd been out walking around, and delicious it indeed was, washed down with a glass of apple juice. This lack of cafes, and the expense of eating out, even at quite down-to-earth places, is the reason so many Norwegians take picnics with them to stop by the road to eat when they're travelling, at any of the wide number of scenic stopover places along the way. Best to leave room in a rucksack to visit a supermarket before setting off on a day's ride on a bike.

Okay, so where are we going, Svein – up to the North Cape and back? Not unless you came to Norway to do some box-ticking, came the reply. Rome is closer to Oslo than the North Cape, and apparently the last day of riding to get there is through bare, featureless scenery – and then you have to retrace your steps to come back again. Far better to do what we did, which was to explore Norway's southwestern region which essentially comprises the fjord country inland from Bergen, and the slightly softer but still stately scenery of the southern part of the country.

So we headed off north from Stavanger along the E9 towards Bergen, a superlatively beautiful and very scenic island-hopping road running practically through the Atlantic Ocean itself, which saw successive islands linked by tunnels (don't wear a dark tint visor in Norway – you'll ride through dozens of tunnels each day), bridges and a couple of ferries.

Generally you don't need to book ahead for these, and can just turn up on a first come, first served basis – unless they run along one of the fjords on what amounts to a sightseeing cruise combined with getting from A to B, in which case it's vital to do so, or end up being disappointed. Take the advice of your guide book – and it is vital to have a good one like the Rough Guide or Lonely Planet, with amenities like restaurants and filling stations that are so spread out, and a ferry timetable book is useful, too, though quite hard to decipher.

Gazing across stretches of water on successive stops often entailed viewing the increasingly controversial salmon farms, the effluent from whose fish is causing an environmental catastrophe, according to anti-farm







campaigners – quite apart from the fact that the fish don't taste as good to eat as ones caught in the wild.

It had been a lovely sunny day as we left Stavanger, but the closer we got to Bergen the darker the sky got, until it finally started drizzling. Not surprising, really, since rain falls on 250 days of the year in Norway's picturesque second-largest city, whose stunning fjordland setting is best appreciated by taking a six-minute ride 320m above sea level on the 26° steep Fløibanen funicular that scales one of the seven mountains Bergen is built on – hence the name (bergen means mountains).

A thousand feet below once the sun comes out you can clearly see the way the city clings to a pair of peninsulas washed by the Atlantic, with slivers of silver fjord glistening through the passes in the southern mountains we'd be heading for next day.

Down at sea level our Radisson Hotel [www.radissonblu.com/hotelnorge-bergen](http://www.radissonblu.com/hotelnorge-bergen) didn't break the bank even with underground parking for the bikes, in spite of its convenient location adjacent to the row of 17 original wooden warehouses called the Bryggen which line the harbour, mostly now populated by pricey shops selling upmarket souvenirs like lined woollen Norwegian sweaters designed to cope with two types of weather – cold and very cold! But a must-do stop is at Baker Brun [www.bakerbrun.no](http://www.bakerbrun.no) to sample one of their scrumptious cinnamon buns baked to a centuries old recipe – or maybe two....

A magnificent feature of the Bergen harbourscape is the Statsraad Lehmkuhl [www.lehmkuhl.no/english](http://www.lehmkuhl.no/english) – a three-masted steel-hulled sailing barque built in Germany in 1914 as a 22-sail training ship for the German merchant marine. This was acquired in 1923 by Norway and is today rented for cruises and shorter trips, both public and private. In addition the Statsraad Lehmkuhl has also participated in several of the Tall Ships' Races starting and finishing in Bergen, most recently in the one held in July 2014.

Between the ancient wooden structures of the Bryggen are passages like Bredsgarden, which penetrate deep into the planked recesses of this medieval quarter. Slightly incongruously, these are dotted with shops selling modern handmade silver jewellery – a local Bergen craft thanks to the silver mines at Konigsberg, en route to Oslo. One is run by Zeva Jelnikar [www.zj-d.com](http://www.zj-d.com) – a former Slovenian landscape architect turned jeweller who settled here 11 years ago and in between teaching her daughter Anya how to beat silver, speaks warmly of her Norwegian hosts.

"Norway is a very conservative country where everything is done the right way, not the cheap way," she says. "It's wealthy enough that people can afford to choose to do things like this, but the result is that everything works well, there are really no poor people, and there is a very active programme of social security. It's a very fine place to live, and especially to bring up children."

But ferociously expensive, it has to be admitted – £17 for a coke and a couple of pieces of fried chicken at a roadside petrol station is typical pricing, although being an oil-based economy you'd expect petrol to be cheap, at least. Only it's not, because it's taxed sky-high for budgetary and environmental reasons – another reason to buy a Tesla – making it around 30% higher than in the UK, and the most costly in Europe.

An average working-class Norwegian earns £60,000 a year, and pays 23% of it in income tax, but VAT is a steep 25%. Given the cost of eating out, maybe that's another reason restaurants and cafes are so few and far between. Dinner in Bergen was our one chance to splurge by eating reindeer steak at the famous To Kokker (as in, two cooks) Restaurant [www.tokokker.no](http://www.tokokker.no) upstairs in the Bryggen. This is ultra lean and very tasty indeed, a kind of light venison traditionally served with the local specialities of yellow beetroot, and the potatoes which accompany every single dish you ever get served in Norway – they're a core crop.



**TOP:** White water rafting, anyone?

**ABOVE:** Hydro electricity is a big player in Norway.



Next morning after a quick visit to the open air Fisketorget fish market facing Bryggen to watch the piles of wet fish caught overnight being piled on to trestles, we headed inland to fjord country, tracing the outline of the incredibly scenic Hardangerfjord along the E7, justly nicknamed Turistvei – the tourist road. The numerous waterfalls along the way caused by melting snow were dwarfed by the mega-sized 46m high Steinsdalsfossen which you can actually walk through and stand behind if you don't mind a refreshing light shower from the cool spray.

We then took a ferry to Utne and rode along the pretty Soerfjord, with the tall Folgefunna glacier as a backdrop glistening in the bright sunshine. As we did so, we encountered a 40-strong vintage truck rally going the other way, mostly 60s and 70s Volvo/Scania/DAF Euro-tractors, but with a massive Kenworth and Peterbilt both hustling them along, the latter with flames painted down the side. Now THAT's a Custom!

Then we turned off the main highway and headed uphill to the glacier, riding through snow-laid meadows and through deep crevasses with steep white walls on either side. Impressive – and also extremely beautiful, perhaps the most scenic afternoon's ride I can ever remember having made.

As we dropped down to Sauna we saw a motocross track off to the right, and discovered the Solberg family spending dad Petter's day off running their KTM minibikes, with mum Juli acting as flag marshal while their four kids aged from six to 12 practised for the races the following weekend. "I don't ride a bike myself, but this is a great way to keep our kids busy and give them some skills as well," said Petter.

"Anyway, we have a race against the town next door at their local track – we have lots of these all over Norway where people of all ages can come and ride bikes. It's a great sport!" There are just three road racing tracks in Norway, two close to Oslo and the other way north, the Arctic Circle Raceway north of said circle. MX is the go in Norway, in spite of the green environmental lobby.

Stopping for gas in Solna we headed to Ropeid to catch our ferry across the fjord to Sand and our hotel Ryfylke Fjordhotel [www.ryfylkefjordhotel.no](http://www.ryfylkefjordhotel.no), but just missed it and had to wait an hour for the next one. No hardship, in such a lovely place, with the



**TOP:** A day out with the family, Norwegian style.

**BELOW:** The view to Sand coming in on a ferry.

sun sparkling off the water. It was 8pm at night, but as bright as midday – midnight sun, remember, with just 10 days to midsummer...

Next morning after yet another superb buffet breakfast – given the cost of eating out, it's always a good idea to eat a hearty breakfast in Norway, as this is always included in the price of the room – we headed south through fjord country to Forsand to catch a long ferry up Lysefjord. Norwegians are lovers of US culture, hence the fact that Harleys are the second best-selling two-wheeled brand there, plus it's quite commonplace to see delectable pieces of America's automotive yesterdays in everyday use, like the mint 1958 Corvette roadster waiting in line behind us for the Lysefjord ferry.

Sadly it had got dull, but at least it was dry, so we could stand out on deck craning our heads backwards to gaze up at the massive crags looming over the narrow waters, before going up to the bridge to meet Captain Rolf Nygaard, a 40 year veteran of sailing the fjords who had a very relaxed feet-up driving technique at the helm of this lovely 45-year-old ferry, the Tustna.

Turned out he was a reader of Svein's, and the owner of a 1938 vintage DKW 250cc two-stroke that had been in his family since 1955. He insisted I took the helm for a few minutes, but I have to say that worrying about keeping this piece of nautical hardware away from the rock faces of the Lysefjord





was a pretty nervy experience. I'd much rather take Bray Hill flat out in top gear than do that again.

Disembarking at Lysebotn we started climbing steeply up a narrow road – I counted 35 hairpin turns, not including the spooky spiral tunnel which while an undoubted engineering feat back in the 1950s when the road was built, in today's context was dark, dangerous, old and narrow. We made it through, though I'm glad I didn't encounter a car coming the other way. This was the gateway to another fabulously memorable ride, through the Borsteinen lunar landscape interspersed with snow walls up to 10m high, even in June.

Then the road narrowed again to twist downwards, though it had only been opened to traffic three weeks beforehand after the last of the reindeer herds had left the valley – too dangerous otherwise in terms of a traffic hazard. Then came a glorious high speed run for the next hour along fast deserted roads to the Revsnes Hotel alongside Byglandsfjord, bathed in sunshine beside the still waters of the fjord. The hotel owns the world's last existing wood-fuelled steamboat still in service, the *SS Bjoren* built in 1866, but though we could inspect it sadly it wasn't a Sunday, the only day it's still used.

Before hitting the high road for the long but enjoyable ride back to Stavanger via Kristiansand and Norway's south coast, we retraced our steps 20km to visit the Bygland Folk Museum, a fascinating collection of genuine (so, not replica) Norwegian country homes transplanted there from all around and built over the past 400 years. Even today, 90% of the houses built in Norway are made out of wood, which is only natural, I guess, with all those trees – we stopped at a tiny sawmill a little further on, and the perfume of the cedar oil coming from the newly hewn timber was sweet and addictive.

Bygland showed how the wood was used, with birch bark employed for roofing that was laid flat, then weighted down by stones. Grass and even mini fir trees were then encouraged to grow on top of that as a further means of insulation, making the home warm in winter and cool in summer, just like an English half-timber building with a thatched roof.

One of the several stops we made en route back to Stavanger was at Jøssingfjord, the site of the Second World War's *Altmark* Incident. In 1940 the German tanker *Altmark* was returning to Germany with 299



**TOP:** Norwegian houses are mostly made from wood.

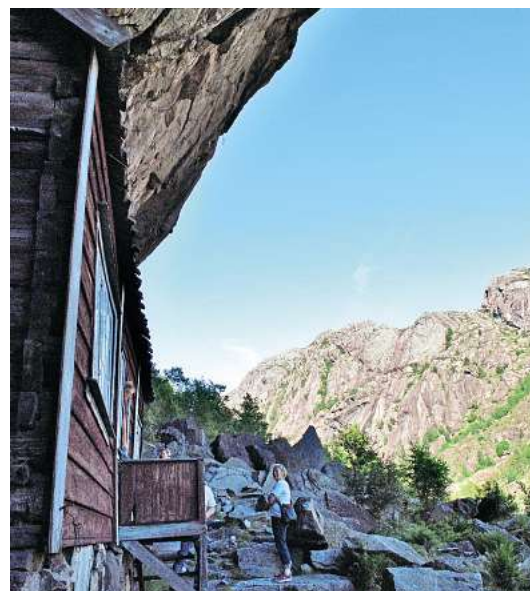
**BELOW LEFT:** Captain Cathcart at the helm.

**BELOW RIGHT:** At Hellern you'll find 200-year-old wooden houses, built under the shelter of huge rock formations.

British prisoners of war on board, and contravened the rules of war by passing through Norwegian waters to get to Germany – Norway was still neutral at that stage. After being intercepted by the British destroyer *HMS Cossack*, *Altmark* sought refuge in the Jøssingfjord, but *Cossack* followed her in and boarded her, rescuing the prisoners.

This ultimately led to Hitler invading Norway in April 1940 – an act still unforgiven by many older Norwegians who suffered dreadfully under German occupation. Today the event is well described by placards at the site, which is also the home of some ancient workmen's houses built in the 1800s under what are called Hellenen, overhanging rock formations which provide shelter from the elements, and allow the houses to be built much less robustly, and thus inexpensively.

They're open to the public for a look into Norway's not so distant past – oil was discovered only in the 1960s, and began flowing hard in the mid-70s. Until then, Norway was a relatively poor country mainly subsisting on agriculture, fishing and raw materials such as timber and aluminium ore, as well as shipbuilding. Oil changed everything – mostly for the better. Today, it's a prosperous, well ordered place still resplendent with some of the most dramatically beautiful natural scenery in the world. And it's accessible, too – especially on a motorcycle. Not to be missed.





Triumph Bonneville T100

# BONNE TIMES

Simple, stylish and surprisingly good fun to ride. Triumph's Bonneville is a motorcycle worth experiencing.

WORDS: Chris Moss PHOTOGRAPHY: Mike Weston







**B**onneville is one of the most famous names in biking history. Built in Meriden from 1959, and sold initially in big numbers, especially in the US, the parallel twin-engined roadster lasted until 1983 when the factory ceased trading.

When John Bloor bought the Triumph name and began producing bikes again in 1991, the Bonneville didn't become part of the model line-up for 10 years. Preferring to concentrate on bikes of a more contemporary design, there was an unwillingness to depend on machinery famous from a previous era. However, the Hinckley-built Bonnies soon proved to be a real success, being particularly popular once again in the States.

The 790cc twins of 2001 mimicked the styling of the original bikes closely, though their modern day levels of performance and reliability set them apart. 2003 saw the introduction of the

first variant, with the T100 model which featured two-tone paint, and chrome engine covers. Aimed at the US market, the Speedmaster and America bikes were also introduced that year. Then in 2004, the sportier Thruxton went on sale. Featuring clip-ons and rearsets, the café racer was also fitted with a slightly more powerful 865cc engine.

The 2006 off-road styled Scrambler model also had the bigger motor, as did all bikes in the Bonneville range from the following year. Fuel-injection arrived in 2008, even if the throttle bodies were carefully made to look like carbs. For 2009, the standard and SE versions of the Bonneville had 17in cast wheels fitted. Since then, several limited edition versions have become available including the T100 SE and T100 Black, Spirit SE, and T214 SE – built to celebrate Johnny Allen's 214.17mph world record-breaking run on the Bonneville Salt Flats in 1956, which inspired the name of the original model. Some of the current Triumph Bonnevilles are now made in Thailand.

## I own one

Dave Champkin has owned his Bonneville T100 for nearly three years from new, clocking 6000 miles on it in that time. He also has a Thruxton.

"I got into biking in 1981 and saw a Bonnie in a bike shop window. I loved its old classic 1960s style. But Triumph was just going out of business at the time, so that was that.

"I got the chance to get one in 2012. I like the retro look and I'm not interested in the modern Triumphs, even though I know they're good bikes. Apart from the classic looks, I like the comfortable ride it gives and thought the £6400 I paid for it was a good price. I use it just for pleasure and don't really do much over 100 miles on it when I take it out. I only ride in good weather and try to avoid the rain if I can.

"I've chromed a few bits to make it prettier, and I'm not planning getting rid of it. I might get it repainted in the future. It's currently green and cream, but I fancy something like red and silver or white and tangerine.

"My Bonnie gets used a lot more than my Thruxton. I've got the Special Edition model with the red frame and it looks fantastic. But the rearsets give my knee some pain so I won't go any distance on it.

"The only problem I've got with my T100 is the misting clocks. It can get bad enough to stop you being able to read them. I don't know anyone who hasn't had the issue. I'm on my third set and it's still a problem. Triumph should sort it out. It's letting down a good product," says the 51-year-old Flitwick man who works for the Royal Mail.



## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO RIDE

The Bonneville T100 is about show just as much as go. Replicating the original 1960s era of the parallel twin, the air-cooled engine, spoked wheels, peashooter silencers and rubber tank pads really help it look the part. With the official aftermarket crash bars, leather panniers, stepped seat, and flyscreen fitted to the bike we tried, the Triumph's style and practicality are enhanced still further.

Riding the Bonneville is a really enjoyable experience. I found it a charming and relaxing bike, and one that's extremely therapeutic to be with. Trundling along some of Gloucestershire's finest rural routes certainly seemed a perfect place to appreciate this very British machine. Heading off on the T100 with no special plan or destination, I found myself smiling from the off. Its capacity might suggest it's a 'big' bike, but the reality is a low, light and lithesome machine that requires little more strength to manage than a middleweight commuter bike. It encourages an easy-going style of riding and prompts a feeling of thorough contentment at all times.

The 865cc air-cooled parallel twin is a lovely engine to use with a linear delivery that makes acceleration prompt, easy and friendly. The five-speed gearbox is beautifully light and slick, but thanks to the amount of power and torque available from very low rpm, there's little need to use it too often. At those revs in the bigger gears there's a tendency for the engine to snatch very slightly, so it's better to drop down a cog or two to prevent that. But at all other engine speeds, healthy throttle response is the order of the day.

The fluidity of the motor is matched by the chassis to give handling that's just as easy and manageable. There's a planted feel from the bike over most surfaces and virtually all speeds. The Hinckley engineers definitely got their sums right with things like frame geometry and



The air-cooled engine works perfectly with the bike's retro image.



Brakes are sufficiently powerful.



Traditional clocks look great.



Proudly branded.

## VALUES

**£2500-£6500**

\* Prices are for early models sold privately in average condition to almost new, well cared for examples available at dealers.

Most used examples have been well maintained.





# I sell them

Garry Mackay, from official dealer Pure Triumph, Woburn in Bedfordshire (01525 292490, [www.puretriumph.co.uk](http://www.puretriumph.co.uk)) knows plenty about Bonnevilles.

"Bonnies are popular bikes, and any used ones we get in only stay here for a couple of weeks. It's very rare to see one of the early carbed models these days. The T100 is the most popular version, thanks to the extra chrome, but the standard and SE bikes are also liked thanks to their lower seat heights.

"Bonnevilles are very well built, but most owners are older and only ride them when the weather's decent. On average they clock around 2000 miles a year. They're quite a seasonal machine and aren't viewed as everyday bikes. We have a customer who did 40,000 miles on his first Bonnie and already has 20,000 on his latest one. But he's the exception really. The majority of my customers use their Bonnies for commuting or a gentle run around the lanes at the weekend.

"People are very fussy about colours and don't like anything too garish. A few colour schemes didn't sell at all well. Customers are generally quite discerning and want something understated, not loud. Several have them as second bikes. The Scrambler and Thruxton models are really popular. The Bonneville range of bikes is phenomenally reliable and we don't really get any problems with them."

suspension settings. With sweet steering and a nice feeling from the Metzeler tyres, twisting through the Gloucestershire countryside couldn't have felt more secure. The rear shocks can get a little choppy in their action over some of the worst ripples, but it certainly isn't bad enough to move the wheel off line.

The handling feels especially good at very slow pace, making it very-well suited to use in town. Feet-up U-turns are simple and the slimness of the bike allows easy filtering, even with the panniers. The brakes have a nice action too. The front caliper doesn't produce the sharpest stopping, though it's still strong enough with its progression and feel reducing the chance of ham-fisted lock ups.

The overall poise of the Triumph will be very much welcomed by those either new to biking or returning to it after a long break. And I can somehow see a lot of those types spending their money on this machine. It would certainly give them a very satisfying impression of what biking is all about and how much fun it can be.

It's been quite some time since I took my time over rides and benefited as much from them as I did on the Bonneville. It allowed me to absorb more of the area where I live, rather than oblige me to focus just on the road as you have to on speedier machines. I'm not really a man who would choose a cruiser as a bike to own. But I could definitely see me opting for the quiet life on one of these laid-back lovelies not far from now. I have to admit, I didn't expect to come out with that sort of remark for a few years yet. I think it's a marvellous motorcycle.

The Triumph's handling is impressive.



## Other bikes to consider



### HARLEY-DAVIDSON SPORTSTER 883

2000-present, 883cc, 45° V-twin, 55bhp, 249kg  
The famous brand's most basic model has massive cred with many. Very much looks the part, but performance is modest.



### KAWASAKI W800

2011-present, 773cc, parallel twin, 70bhp, 199kg  
Just as authentic looking as the Bonnie, the 800's replica looks are spot on. Good low rpm drive and stable handling assist the appeal.



### MOTO GUZZI V7 SPECIAL

2012-present, 744cc, 90° V-twin, 44bhp, 179kg  
Stylish Italian roadster rides well with its flexible engine and agile handling. Suspension could be better.



### ROYAL ENFIELD BULLET

2007-present, 499cc, single cylinder, 27bhp, 187kg  
Simple, steady and relaxing, the Bullet is a charming plodder. Styling mimics a forgotten era. Low performance won't suit all.



### STYLING

T100's head-turning looks are guaranteed by its retro styling. Air-cooled engine, spoked wheels, peashooter pipes and tank pads help the authenticity.

### GREASE UP

Keep the swingarm pivot greased and the bearings will last a lifetime. It's not listed on the service schedule.

### FINISH

Even better on later bikes, the Triumph's finish is strong and durable. But regular cleaning is a must if you want the Bonneville to stay attractive. Get on with it!

### HOME SERVICING

Access to all areas is excellent, so the home mechanic can tackle just about all maintenance. Even dealing with the shim-adjusted valves isn't too tricky. It's not a frequently needed task either; every 12k miles.

### GEARCHANGE ACTION

Test ride the bike and check the gearbox action is light and slick. If it's stiff, suspect an accident-damaged bent gearshaft which is an expensive fix.



### ELECTRICS

It's worth cleaning and protecting all wiring connectors and earthing points. Early Bonnevilles' wiring can be corroded. Check the underseat CDI connector is secure.

### ENGINE

Smooth, flexible and friendly, the parallel twin is a pleasure to sample. It doesn't make much power, but what it has got is very easy to access. Economy is good.

### GEARING

Fitting a one tooth smaller front sprocket is a cheap and effective mod. The lower gearing improves acceleration and reduces any low speed snatching.

### SUSPENSION

The bike's suspension can be improved. Using a heavier grade oil in the forks brings better control, though you'll have to replace the shocks if they feel bad.

### ACCESSORIES

A full range of Triumph's accessories include exhaust pipes, replacement seats, screens, crash bars, panniers, racks and a centrestand.

## Specification

### TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE T100

**Engine:** 790cc, air-cooled, 8v, dohc, parallel twin

**Maximum power:** 62bhp @ 7400rpm

**Maximum torque:** 44lb-ft @ 3500rpm

**Gearbox:** Five-speed

**Final drive:** Chain

**Frame:** Tubular steel cradle

**Suspension:**  
(F) 41mm telescopic forks, no adjustment.  
(R) twin shocks, adjustable preload

**Brakes:** (F) 310mm disc, twin-piston caliper.  
(R) 255mm disc, twin-piston caliper

**Tyres:** (F) 100/90 x 19  
(R) 130/80 x 17

**Seat height:** 775mm

**Wheelbase:** 1500mm

**Dry weight:** 214kg

**Fuel capacity:** 16 litres

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The Bonneville T100 is a good used buy. Generally owned by older and more careful riders, it's not a bike likely to be abused or neglected. The majority are used more for special occasions than everyday duties, so mileages are generally low and clocked up in better weather. Even so, as always you need to take care before parting with your cash.

Bear in mind the earliest-made Bonnies have been around for more than 10 years now so may well show a bit of wear and tear. You shouldn't be too afraid to entertain bikes with higher mileages. In the right hands the twins can do 50,000 miles or more quite reliably. More concerning can be older bikes that have been stored for long periods. Done properly, in the right place, this won't lead to too many issues. If that's not the case, all sorts of subtle corrosion inside the engine and within the wiring may well lead to subsequent failures.

The Triumph's finish is good and strong as long as some sort of attention is paid to it via a regular cleaning session. Otherwise expect corrosion in harder to reach areas.

Engines are good and strong and will deliver reliable service if maintained regularly. Check the service history. Home maintenance is easy, so investigate the seller's ability and ask for all receipts. Valves need checking every 12,000 miles but rarely need adjusting before double that mileage or more. Crank sensors have been known to pack up. Having a spare handy is a wise move. Regulator



Twin silencers produce a lovely noise.

rectifiers have been known to pack up on early bikes. They can damage the alternator if you're unlucky.

If the motor's in good order, any rattles, taps, and smoking should not be evident. Go for a ride and check for clutch slip or wisps of smoke from the exhausts on the overrun. Check the action of the gearbox. If it's not perfect then something could be amiss. Gearchange shafts can bend if the bike is dropped on the left-hand side. It's not a cheap fix.

Chassis-wise, check the suspension feels under control. Fork action is a bit soft and rear shocks' damping isn't up to really hard riding. For general sensible speeds, both ends should feel fine. The front brake is a bit weedy. Aftermarket pads and a caliper service will restore some lost power. Clocks mist up if ridden in the rain for long or washed too enthusiastically. Looked after, Bonnies will go and last well.



# A long time ago

## Kevin Cameron



Unfortunately the revivals cannot share much with the original other than the name and some suggestion of style. Those who designed classic machines are gone now, and so are most of those who manufactured them. If we want

more, we must become amateur historians, collecting books, brochures, badges, and even the machines themselves. There is great charm in this – a favourite photo from the title page of *The Illustrated History of Douglas Motorcycles* (Briercliffe & Brockway) shows a 1920s sidecar rig on block-tread tyres, stopped in a small town. The rider, in full rain cape and flat cap, waits astride as his sidecar passenger, leaving her door open, seeks directions from a shopkeeper. Behind them, projecting from a side street, stand a stolid pair of draft horses hitched to a wagon carrying bagged grain.

Despite such photos and despite my embarrassingly extensive collection of carburettor jets and needles, time cannot reverse to bring the past back to life.

The past is safe now. As I survey the rise and fall of British motorcycle manufacturers, I feel I am watching a complex organism, struggling to adapt – not always quickly enough – to a changing environment. Triumph sought to achieve reliable function above all and became popular, only to change ownership. Then came practical Edward Turner, who knew the value of cost control.

Other makers produced admirable innovation, won races and market share, but were cut down by the Great Depression. Some time in the 1920s there were more than 200 makers in England, most of them just ‘assemblers’ as Aprilia is today – buying in engines from JAP or Blackburne, hubs or brakes from Royal Enfield or Horton Hub, cables, carbs, magnetos, seats and other cycle parts from whoever could fill the order.

Being a ‘mere assembler’ does not in retrospect imply low status, for a Brough SS100 recently set a record for motorcycle auction price, and G Brough was an assembler.

Being clever offered no protection. Sunbeams were expensive and stayed that way too long. When the Second World War ended, the company came back, embodying an idea widely hailed at the time – that motorcycles could return to the popularity of the 1920s peak by adopting the features of cars.

Douglas won races on pavement, then on the newly-popular dirt tracks, but could it be that its two cylinders and small valves enabled the company to master ohv operation faster than their single-cylinder competitors with bigger, heavier valves? In any case, as power rose,

Many today place a high value on the ‘authentic’, and one outcome is interest in the revival of classic brands such as Brough or Horex.

the rear cylinder went short of cooling air, and cycle parts – especially brakes – became more important to TT lap times. They too were revived for a few breaths of postwar air but the product, although nice-looking and refined, did not garner market enough to live.

Edward Turner’s Triumph twins sold well because they were priced to sell – he took care to design the original Speed Twin engine to slot into the Tiger 90 single’s frame and cycle parts. Later came the essential leap – into the US market. Triumphs were lighter and handier than the agricultural American product, and they accelerated. With Turner in charge, efficient production prevailed, and British twins remained a good business for 20 years. They and other makes were killed by an abstraction called ‘management’. This idea of management holds that a corporate manager, working from numbers and statistics alone, does a better job as his knowledge of, and involvement in product decreases. Fashion, like the tides, comes and goes.

Rudge had its period of success but by 1934 its finances had sickened. Only Graham Walker’s ‘syndicate’ could still afford to run them in races. Shortly they were bought by EMI. Many once-proud makers switched their tooling to arms production in the Second World War and were not resuscitated thereafter. Today, interested historians take photographs of brick premises that once housed row upon row of machine tools, powered by the usual overhead array of line shafting, with driving belts descending to each machine. So many businesses, unable to earn the cost of updating product and production, slowly strangled on uncontrolled production costs. There was simply no way to get from where they were then to today’s world, leaving us with a few bikes in museums, written records and photos, and a brand revival or two.

Often, even the buildings that once housed the enterprise are long gone, and all the bemused visitor can do is try to imagine the view from factory windows.

One day our own time will seem as remote. Can that be? See our expanding technologies, the sophistication of our electronics! Soon enough it will seem as limited, strange, and downright misguided as 26in wheels and iron pistons.

### Who is Cameron?

Kevin is one of the most widely-respected technical gurus on the planet. Author of some of the most iconic and landmark books in motorcycle publishing, Cameron brings the innermost workings of what goes on in an engine to the fore in an easy-to-access way. Simply put, Kevin Cameron is a genius of all things metal that are fixed to two wheels

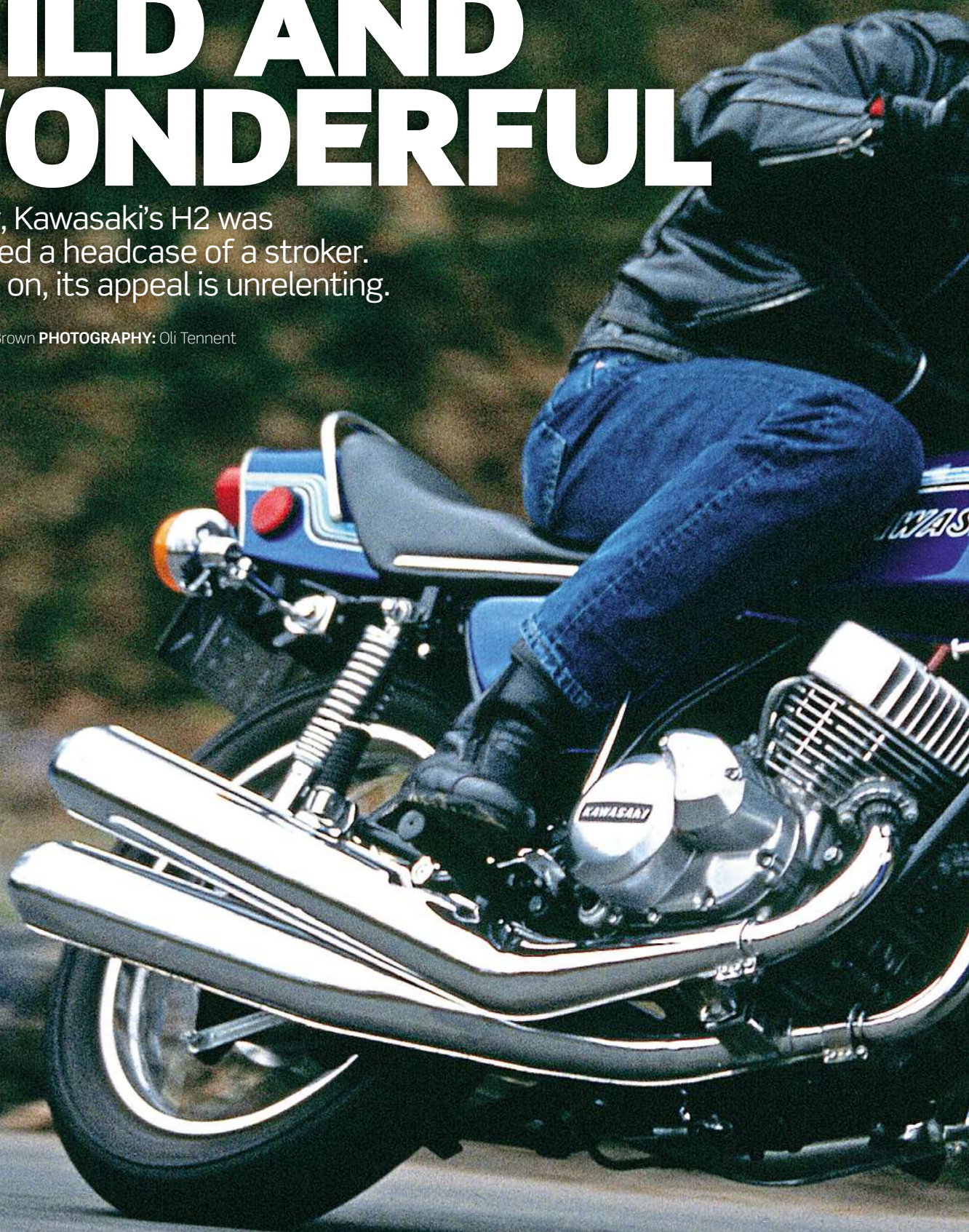


Kawasaki H2 750 Mach IV

# WILD AND WONDERFUL

In its day, Kawasaki's H2 was considered a headcase of a stroker. Decades on, its appeal is unrelenting.

WORDS: Roland Brown PHOTOGRAPHY: Oli Tennent







It's not surprising that Kawasaki settled on Ninja H2 when it was looking for a name for its new supercharged weapon, with its screaming sound and potential for fearsome straight-line speed. The Ninja part is aggressive in itself, but if you're looking for excitement, performance and attitude in Kawasaki's back catalogue you don't need to turn many pages before being smacked in the face by the fiery two-stroke triple that was the original H2.

Of all the early-Seventies Superbikes, the 750 H2 – which was also known as the Mach IV – surely had the most evil reputation of all. Outrageous speed, explosive power delivery and marginal handling were combined with excessive noise, smoke and thirst to produce the ultimate bad-boy's motorbike. It's debatable whether any other production two-wheeler has been quite as antisocial as this. It's highly unlikely that any manufacturer other than Kawasaki, which was becoming the marque for high performance when the H2 appeared in 1972, would have built it.

The bike's format was simple, and centred on the 748cc three-pot motor. This was basically an enlarged and strengthened version of the 499cc parallel twin unit from Kawasaki's H1, which had appeared in 1968, although no parts were shared. The extra capacity, along with milder exhaust porting and ignition timing, allowed a slightly wider spread of torque than that of the peaky H1, which itself was notoriously quick. More importantly, the bigger bike's power output was increased to a maximum of 74bhp at 6800rpm, considerably more than rivals, such as Honda's 750 four and Suzuki's GT750 triple.

Much of the rest of the Mach IV was similar to the smaller triple, too, including the conventional twin-downtube steel frame. The forks held wire wheels, in 19in front and 18in rear diameters, with twin shocks and a brake combination of a single front disc and rear drum. Gentle, rounded styling and fairly high handlebars added to the Kawasaki's deceptively normal, almost laid-back, appearance.

However, there was nothing remotely ordinary about its straight-line performance, which made the Kawa a match for any bike on the roads back in 1972. Top speed was a highly competitive 120mph. And the two-stroke's relatively light weight – around 210kg with fuel – meant



it got there very quickly, rocketing through the standing quarter-mile in 12.5 seconds. (The CB750, for example, was a second slower, and even Kawasaki's own 900cc Z1 four, released a year after the H2, was barely quicker over the quarter.)

Although sheer speed was the H2's main claim to fame, its fearsome reputation was also based on handling that in normal use was quite adequate, but which could easily be provoked into throwing a high-speed wobbler. Many of the horror stories were exaggerated, and the triple's handling was generally not too bad at all. But even Kawasaki's engineers accepted their bike had a nasty side. In addition to the standard fitment friction-type steering damper at the steering head, they offered a hydraulic damper, mounted on a lug welded to the frame, as an official accessory.

Even that second steering damper couldn't prevent a hard-ridden H2's handlebars from flapping disturbingly at times. In particular, anyone foolish enough to have allowed the power band to bite in the middle of a bend stood a chance of leaving an H2-sized hole in the hedge some distance down the road. Kawasaki was right when it said the triple was no bike for the inexperienced.

Riders who did get into trouble could at least rely on a front disc brake that was better than most of the drums that many powerful bikes were fitted with back in 1972. The stopper was rated highly at the time but, even so, many H2 pilots invested in the optional second disc and caliper, which could be fitted using lugs provided on the right fork slider.

Most owners, and road testers, were happy to accept a few shortcomings. "The performance potential of this bike is so vastly superior to most other two-wheeled products that if poke is your main criterion, such things as riding position, economy and durability are things you'll learn to live with or adapt to your secondary requirements," wrote one UK tester. "If you can afford the fuel, the surging Kawasaki Mach IV is a very good



**One tester of the time said of the H2: "(its) acceleration will satisfy even the most mind-wrenched adrenaline addict"**

**BELOW: If ever there was more of a motorcycle that just screamed 1970s biking in Britain then surely this a big contender for extolling the 'feel' of a generation.**

machine for safe, aggressive driving."

Ah yes, the fuel. One aspect of the triple's performance that seems extraordinary all these years later was its horrendous thirst. High fuel consumption was an unavoidable drawback of H2 ownership, with many riders averaging less than 25mpg, and even figures of below 20mpg being common. With a tank capacity of just 18 litres, that meant frequent stops and big bills.

Back in the early Seventies many riders were prepared to put up with poor economy for high performance, and the Mach IV sold well, especially in the States.

The H2 also led directly to the H2R racebike, whose blend of Kawasaki colouring and distinctly scary chassis performance led to it being nicknamed the 'Green Meanie'. The H2R was notoriously hard to tame but was raced with considerable success by riders including French-Canadian Yvon DuHamel and Britain's Paul Smart, who both won big US races. In Europe, Mick Grant rode a factory-backed H2R in 1974.

Kawasaki kept building the H2 roadster for several years, introducing numerous modifications through A, B and C models while retaining the bike's basic look and feel. Arguably the biggest change came with 1974's H2B, which had a 3bhp less-powerful engine, new frame, longer swingarm, revised suspension and subtly restyled bodywork.

The H2C of 1975 featured a revised lubrication system but although this reduced emissions there was little that Kawasaki could do about the triple's antisocial nature. A few years later the H2 had disappeared, leaving behind it a reputation which, almost four decades later, is set to be further reinforced by the arrival of the Ninja H2.

### WHAT'S IT LIKE TO RIDE?

The old tales of the H2's acceleration and spiteful handling were enough to make me approach it with plenty of respect, even decades after its launch. The triple looks misleadingly small and ordinary but it's still a very striking machine, especially one in the superb condition of this blue 1972 model, which had recently been restored to show-winning standard.

Simply firing-up the H2 was an experience. Ignition on, lift up the right footrest, hold down the choke lever





with my right thumb and kick. The motor burst into life with a deafening mixture of mechanical rattle and crackle from the three exhaust pipes, that belched blue smoke while I blipped the throttle. Neutral is at the bottom of the gearbox (rather than between first and second), so I hooked up into gear with my left boot, let out the rather stiff clutch and pulled away.

For a bike with such a reputation for speed and violence, the H2 initially felt surprisingly docile and easy to ride. The trio of 32mm Mikuni carbs gave a reasonably crisp response from 3000rpm or lower (though there's a fair amount of vibration at low revs), and the Kawa could happily be cruised along without need for repeated glances at the tacho. This bike's high bars and fairly forward-set footrests gave a relaxed riding position, and its suspension was compliant enough to give a reasonably comfortable ride.

When I dropped it down a couple of cogs and opened it up the H2 really came alive. At about 5000rpm the exhaust note turned into a shriek, and the bike leapt forward in a frenzied charge, tacho needle waving madly across the dial in the vicinity of the modest 7500rpm redline. On a couple of occasions the Kawa ripped through the ton mark – its rider hanging on tight and grinning broadly – with plenty more to come.

By modern standards the H2 is only moderately quick but it must have been mindblowing all those years ago. Even now, the wind-blown riding position, the engine's vibration and the screaming two-stroke exhaust note combine to make riding it a real blast. These days the triple would be easily outperformed by many middleweights, never mind Superbikes, but it still manages to feel exciting and to explain why one tester said its "acceleration will satisfy even the most mind-wrenched adrenaline addict".

On my fairly short ride this bike was also well

The most powerful 750 superbike



Kawasaki wasn't ever coy about selling the H2.

behaved, perhaps helped by the relatively modern and reassuringly grippy Conti that replaced the original ribbed front tyre. Even with the adjustable damper wound down, the triple was stable both in bends and in a straight line at up to a ton. Its steering was pleasantly light, too, aided by the wide bars and the bike's fairly light weight.

Mind you, hitting one particular bump while well cranked over sent a warning through the bars that this Kawasaki was not to be pushed too far. I also had to be aware of the single-disc front brake, which by modern standards was undeniably feeble. After a series of hard stops had reduced the stopper's initial bite I could appreciate why plenty of riders paid to upgrade it with a second front disc. I could also certainly understand why so many riders hold the raw and fiery H2 triple in such high regard.

### WHAT THEY COST

There are enough H2s around, and even on sale at any given time, that it's a little easier to estimate values than with many less-popular classics. "You'd probably expect

### Specification

#### KAWASAKI H2 750 MACH IV 1972

**Engine type:** Air-cooled two-stroke triple

**Displacement:** 748cc

**Bore x stroke:** 71 x 63mm

**Compression ratio:** 7:1

**Carburation:** 3 x 32mm Mikunis

**Claimed power:** 74hp @ 6800rpm

**Transmission:** 5-speed

**Electrics:** 12v battery

**Frame:** Tubular steel duplex cradle

**Front suspension:** Telescopic, no adjustment

**Rear suspension:** Twin shock absorbers, adjustable preload

**Front brake:** Single 295mm disc, twin-piston caliper (second disc optional extra)

**Rear brake:** 203mm sls drum

**Front tyre:** 3.25 x 19in

**Rear tyre:** 4.00 x 18in

**Wheelbase:** 1410mm

**Seat height:** 800mm

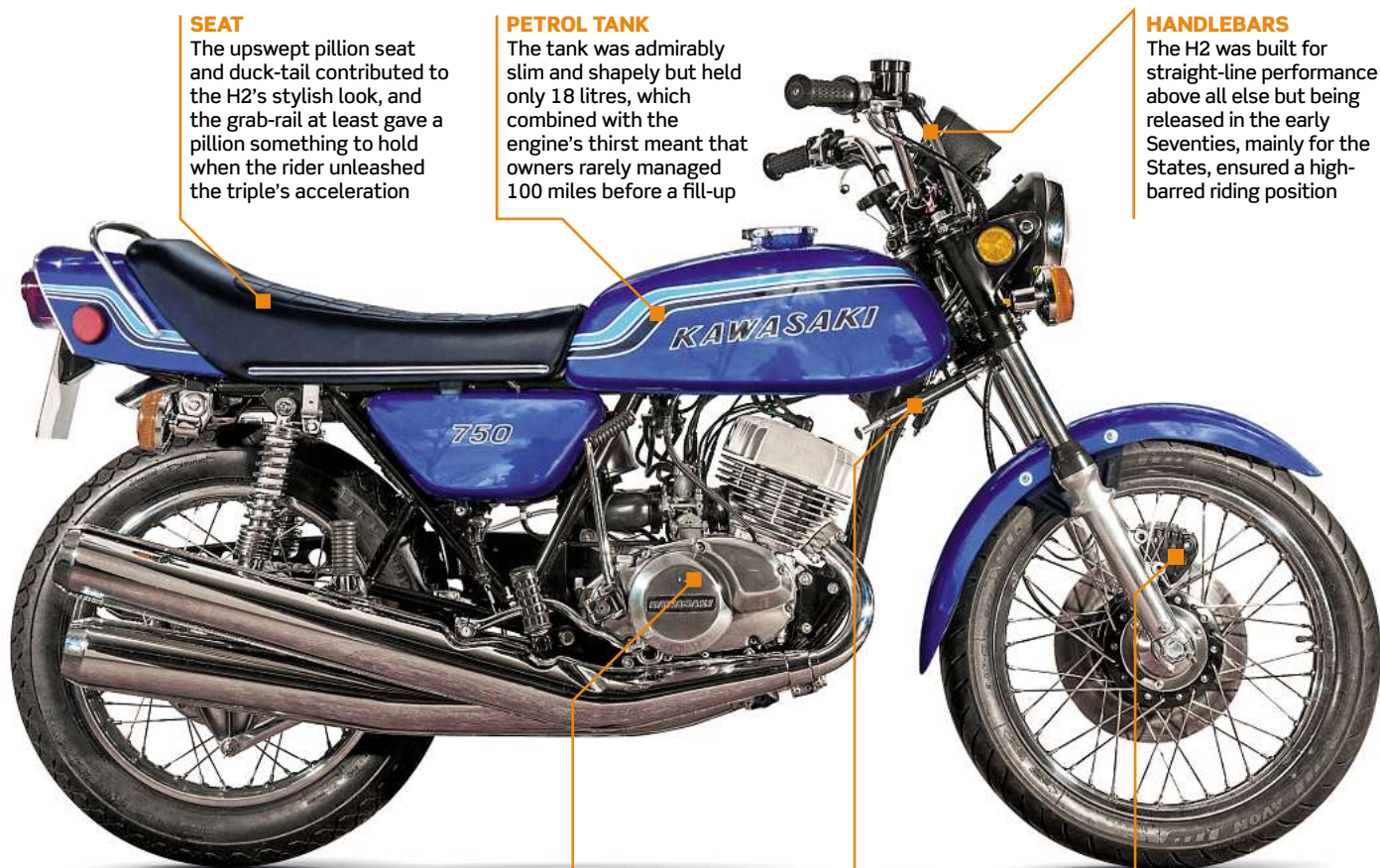
**Fuel capacity:** 18 litres

**Weight:** 210kg wet



Yes, we're the same as you. We want to ride this motorcycle very, very much. Now.





### SEAT

The upswept pillion seat and duck-tail contributed to the H2's stylish look, and the grab-rail at least gave a pillion something to hold when the rider unleashed the triple's acceleration

### PETROL TANK

The tank was admirably slim and shapely but held only 18 litres, which combined with the engine's thirst meant that owners rarely managed 100 miles before a fill-up

### HANDLEBARS

The H2 was built for straight-line performance above all else but being released in the early Seventies, mainly for the States, ensured a high-barred riding position

to pay three grand for a basket case and six for a runner," says Kawa Triples Club secretary Malcolm Anderson, who owns a collection of H2s himself. "A good example would be worth £9-10,000, and you're looking at £12-13,000 for something really decent."

Year of manufacture and colour do make a difference, Malcolm says, with this early 1972 H2 being one of the most popular, and the 1975 H2C the most desirable of all, especially in purple rather than the alternative red. The early H2's blue is popular, although the gold of most US market models is also very attractive; green is preferred to brown for the 1974 model. The majority of triples were sold in the States, so if a bike is one of the

### ENGINE

The 748cc air-cooled triple powerplant was essentially a scaled-up version of Kawasaki's 499cc parallel twin the H1, but the components weren't interchangeable

### STEERING DAMPER

As well as the standard fitment friction damper at the steering head, the wobble-prone triple had a lug for an accessory hydraulic damper welded to its frame

### FRONT BRAKE

Looking at that single disc and twin-pot caliper, it's not surprising that plenty of H2 owners upgraded the standard stopper with Kawasaki's optional second disc

**BELOW:** You could push the H2 but only so far. At least the bike gave you lots of warning that you weren't paying attention!

estimated 5-600 first registered in the UK it's likely to be worth a bit more.

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Despite the H2's reputation for screaming performance and excess, it's actually impressively reliable – provided its engine remains in standard condition. "I've known riders who've done tens of thousands of miles with no trouble," says Malcolm Anderson. "One of my bikes is well used but at one point I left it for 18 months, after which it started fourth kick and ran fine."

The problems tend to occur with tuned triples, which can eat pistons and other parts at quite a rate. "Expansion chambers and other tuning mods are the main things that cause problems," says Malcolm. "If there is something wrong you'll need to budget £1000 for an engine rebuild." If a standard H2 has a weak spot, it's the gearbox. "They tend to jump out of first and fifth. If you're thinking of buying one, take a test ride and make sure you go right through the gearbox."

Malcolm's other advice, not surprisingly, is to join the Triples Club ([www.kawasakitriplesclub.net](http://www.kawasakitriplesclub.net)), which has more than 400 members, many of whom own several bikes, and is a good source of machines to buy, as well as get advice via its forum. The H2's popularity means that parts availability is good by Seventies standards, with few components really hard to find.





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**HONDA ST1300A** 2009, silver, 28k miles, tinted screen, raised handlebars, s/s brake lines, new battery and tyres, top box and tank bag, fitted Garmin 600 & 12v aux socket, MoT and serviced, £7500. Tel. 01224 732120. Grampian.

**HONDA TL150** Miller conversion and exhaust, Japan home market model, imported and reg (V5), 1974, MoT, quite engine, trials TY reg, lighting set available, nothing to do but ride/enjoy, £1200. Tel. 01300 320446. S Yorks.

**HYPER-PRO REACTIVE SAFETY CONTROL (RSC)** steering damper for a Kawasaki 1400 ZZR 2006, black, like new all instructions and drawings available, cost £390 new, sensible offers welcome. Tel. 01805 623310. Devon.

**KAWASAKI ELIMINATOR ZL 400** import for sale, MoT til Aug 2015, good runner but needs some work on exhaust and new front tyre, offers around £500. Tel. 07788 622200 after 6pm or text. Cumbria.

**KAWASAKI ZXR 750 L1** 1993, 26k miles, MoT July, no advisories, black/purple, owned 13 yrs, all original superb condition and ride, aspiring classic, £1195. Tel. 01332 675428. Derbys.

**RICHA SLICK** touring/urban ankle boots, brand new with tags/box, size 8-11, £45. Tel. Terry 07944 176259.

**SUZUKI GS 500** 2006, vgc, tested till July, mature owner, 7,980 miles with previous MoTs to prove, new tyres, rack and very reliable and fantastic mpg, £1295 ono. Tel. 07719 717621. S Yorks.

**TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE AMERICA** 800cc, c/w pair of Grunty pipes, 18k dry miles, garaged, reg JIB 4659, £3900 Open to offers Tel. 01202 610138; 07882 607847. Dorset.

**SUZUKI GSF 650** Bandit K6, ABS model, with 17k miles, blue, two owners from new, s/h, MoT, just serviced, exc cond, extras- h/grips, top box, Datatool 3 alarm & immobiliser, R & G crash bungs, optimate lead fitted, £2650 ono. Tel. 07971 404308. Staffs.

**TRIUMPH SPRINT** 955cc, 4k miles, blue, excellent for year, V reg, hardly used, owner died, selling on behalf of family, panniers fitted, fairing standard, one owner, full s/h, alarm system, few extras. Tel. 01287 640472. E Cleveland, N Yorks.

**YAMAHA VIRAGO 535** clutch cable and rear wheel linings, all new, £20. Tel. 01933 430026; 07982 487505. Northants.

## Parts for sale

**APRILIA TUONO** factory rear seat cover, also fits RSVR, £50 Email: l.bradbury007@btint.com. Cambs.

**BIKE JACKET** mens black, leather Danni Sport, size 50, unmarked, £40. Tel. 01352 771061. Flints.

**BIKE TRAILER** with new wheel bearing and tyres incl lighting bar and plus, £125. Tel. 01723 585864 evenings. N Yorks.

**BMW K1100LT** for spares, exc cond, flood damage last winter, any reasonable offer. Tel. 00 353 872647621. Ireland.

**BMW R1200 GS/GSA** (pre watercooled), Touratech low adjustable, comfort rider's seat, pristine condition, £200. Tel. 07742 970795. E Sussex.

**BONNEVILLE FLY SCREEN** tinted, still boxed, unwanted gift, £45. Tel. 01406 550338. Lincs.

**BSA BANTAM** 4 speed engine wanted, may consider rough bike, why? Tel. (01432) 353313. Herefordshire.

**CAGIVA 125** Freesia, Moto Morini 350 Dart, parts frame/ swing arm, wheels, Brembos, top yoke, seat, bodywork, forks, front speedo drive, spindle etc, Kawasaki 250LTD side panels, yoke, cable operated front brake caliper. Tel. 07858 134475. Durham.

**GILLES VARIOBAR** with riser, Honda VFR 800 Fi98-01, in vgc, £300 plus when bought new, £200. Tel. 01544 260735. Powys.

**GIVI MONORACK BRACKETS** 1998-2002, Honda Hornet, as new condition, c/w all fitting instructions and fittings, no rust or scratches, £25 ono plus postage or buyer collects (cost £85). Tel. 01582 601467. Beds.

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**HARLEY FAT BOB** 2010, rear light unit and lens, £20. Tel. 07941 140312. Surrey.

**HONDA CB 900F** rear indicators/Honda Fireblade 900RX rear indicators/Honda chrome chain guard, some rust, could be 750/4, Offers Tel. 01487 824144; 07980 663859. Cambs.

**HINCKLEY BONNEVILLE T100** pair silencers, brand new, never been on bike, still in boxes, £100 plus p&p. Tel. 01255 479951. Clacton-on-Sea.

**HONDA CB 250/4** jade, 1990s, 7-spoke wheel, 110/ 80/17 front, 140/80/17 rear, may suit other Honda VFR 400 etc or Supermoto build, £130 ono; other parts available. Honda NTV 650 Transalp, V-Twin motor, carbs, electrics, £175 the lot, suit chop build. Tel. 07858 134475. Durham.

**HONDA CG125 PARTS** seat, air box and filter, battery box, exhaust bracket, clocks bracket, foot pegs, side panel, chrome headlight bracket, sell separately or the lot, £55. Tel. 07752 443794. Denbighshire.

**HONDA NS400R** clocks, lens cowl, fork guards, petrol tap, left exhaust, tuned barrels with heads, two gutted exhaust, £60; Ducati 400SS electrics, seat, plastics, foot rest, headlight, heads, carbs, £600. Tel. 078160 43480. Staffs.

**HYDRAULIC M/C LIFT** second hand but good used condition and very clean, little private use, buyer collects. Tel. Alan on 01268 775184. Essex.

**KAWASAKI GPZ 1100 A1-A3**, Unitrack seat, excellent original condition, £70; Kawasaki GPZ 750 turbo seat, re-covered, exc cond, £50; also service manual for this machine, £25. Tel. 01827 66952; 07961 911643. Staffs.

**KAWASAKI W800** pair unused exhaust/silencers, £300. Tel. 01661 853032. Northumberland.

**KAWASAKI ZZR 600D** 1995 model, owners manual, part no. 99976-1126, top yoke with barrel/petrol filler cap, one key, front indicators, seat, £80. Tel. 07505 464654. W Mids.

**LADIES JACKET** black leather, padded arms, room for back pad, good condition, size 16", £50; new mens lace sided trousers, leather, size 42" waist, 30" inside, £50; Harley Davidson detachable for Streetbob, 2006, £25; Harley Davidson back rest to fit 2006, Street Bob, good cond, £90; 1 clutch master fit VTR 1000 Bandit/1200 and other bikes, £45; New Honda choke cable fit, RS250A, £15; Yamaha XJR 1200/130, collector box, as new, £95. Tel. 07790 934835. Staffs.

**MOTO GUZZI V50** /Monza mudguards, rear light and number plate holder wanted, also Honda 500/4 exhaust downpipes, will be painted black so chrome condition unimportant. Tel. 01270 811762. Cheshire.

**SPADA M/C JACKET** mens size L, black with red trim, armoured, removable lining, worn twice, as new, illness forces sale, £30. Tel. 01252 614451. Hants.

**SUZUKI GSK 750F** stainless downpipes, unused, £80 ovno; (collection only). Tel. 07801 629206; 01825 750468. E Sussex.

**TRIUMPH TIGER 800** white, great condition, fully serviced & history. 26500 miles, tall screen, rear hugger. Offers around £4000. Tel. 07966 552897. Glos.

**SUZUKI GSX 1400** genuine Yoshimura twin outlet exhaust and link pipe as fitted to the Final Edition in immaculate unused condition, £170, also polished 4-into-1 collector box for the same bike, £70. Tel. 07971 448463. W Mids.

**SUZUKI RM 250** parts f/wheel/disc, swing arm, air box, petrol tank, seat, panels, mudguard, yellow, mid 80s, job lot, £75; Suzuki GT 125 exhausts, useable or spares, not mint, £70; GT 250 side panels, f/brake assembly, £35; wheels, not mint, £100 pair. Tel. 07858 134475. Durham.

**SUZUKI TS 250 ENGINE** 1979-80s, complete; GS 550E kick-start engine, £100; GT 125 77 model engine, spares, Suzuki GSF 400 import, 1990 engine, 36km runner, £200; exhaust 4/1 Bandit 400, £150; GS 550E forks/yokes, wheels, swing arm, C&S, s/s headlight brackets. Tel. 07858 134475. Durham.

**TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE** 790cc, T100 fully chromed front nudge bar, protection should bike fall over bike protection, cost new £131, will sell for £50 only - absolute bargain. Tel. 07836 700313. Kent.

**TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE (HINKLEY)** new unused Hepco & Becker pannier racks, cost £220, sell £150 plus post; also Renntec rear rack, £60; Givi top box, (small), £50; top plate, £10. Tel. John Knibb 01626 369407; 07751 314562. Devon.

**TRIUMPH SPRINT ST1050** 2006-2010, standard chain guard, £10; Quill undersea exhaust, £125; Powerbronze d/bubblescreen, £15; Bagster tank cover, silver/grey, £40; all used but in good condition. Tel. 07813 074148. W Mids.

## Parts wanted

**WANTED BSA A10** Ariel type rear brake plate, complete, will consider complete hub and pair forks for A10 with 8" single sided brake. Tel. 01723 515546. N Yorks.

**WORKSHOP MANUAL** for Yamaha SR 400 or SR 500. Tel. 07746 428555. Glos.

## Wanted

**ANY MAKE OR SIZE** classic motorcycle wanted from a basket case to one in nice or restored cond. Cash waiting. Tel. 07811 189755. Staffs.

**BELSTAFF WANTED** wax cotton, trial or road jacket, any cond considered, will collect or pay post. Tel. 01432 353313; 07989 448418. Herefordshire.

**GL 1000 WANTED** runner preferred but consider anything, also want good spares, especially nos parts. Tel. 07828 103437. Notts.

**WANTED YAMAHA SR500** for project, non runner, rough, crashed, bashed in bits, abandoned project etc, will collect. Tel. 01474 746854; 07789 260740. Kent.

**WANTED YAMAHA VIRAGO 535** or Kawasaki EN 500, will pay up to £750 cash. Tel. 07597 174839. Mold, Chester.

**TRIUMPH TIGER CUB** must be in good useable condition and sensibly priced this bike is to be a retiring present for wife for pottering around, will travel 100 miles from Lowestoft. Tel. 07931 432921. Suffolk.

## Miscellaneous

**ALPINESTARS JET ROAD** Goretex gloves, size L (10), unworn, £75. Tel. 07894 078815. Notts.

**BARBOUR** lightweight International jacket, size 38", new unworn cost, £250 offers. Tel. John 01626 369407; 07751 314562. Devon.

**BMW TANK BAG** for R1200 RT, clip-on type, expandable, waterproof, map pocket, used once only, £25 plus p&p or collect Tel. 0161 9697706. Cheshire.

**GIVI E360 MONOKEY** top box, black gloss lid, £40 buyer collects. Tel. Colin 01524 272032. Lancs/Cumbria border.

**HAYNES WORKSHOP MANUALS** Honda: C65/70/90, CB100/125N, CB/CD/CM 125T, V45 Sabre, CB750/900 DOHC4, Suzuki: GT/ZR/TS50, GS/GSX 250/400 twins, GS550/750 4s,

Kawasaki: AR125, 400Twins, GPZ500S, 400/500/550 4s, Yamaha: SA50 Passola, Trial Bikes, XS750. Triumph Tiger Cub. BMW Twins 498/599/746/898. all the above. Honda CB450 and Kawasaki Z200/ KL250, £15. Tel. 01254 278156.

**LADIES BULLSOM M/C** BOOTS Summer walk and ride, size 6 (39), ankle length, lace-up with velcro strap, reflector on heel, gear lever pad, worn twice, illness forces sale, £30. Tel. 01252 614451. Hants.

**PRE-WAR HANDLEBAR WATCH** wanted for motorcycle/bicycle. Tel. 07596 238484. Swindon.

**REMUS SPORTS CANS** for BMW K1600, 2 yrs old, as new, £250; H-D 2008 road king exhausts never used, £150. Tel. 07968 328495. Northants.

**ROAD RACE** and speedway motorcycle books. Tel. 01624 897998. Isle of Man.

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**VENTURI THROW OVERS** new, ideal for sports middle-weight etc, 26 ptrs, cost £139, £85 ono. Tel. 01782 334850. Staffs.

**WEISE FULL LEATHERS** S46 MDC boots, S8 Richadrift boots S8 Weise Caverlar jacket SL pants to match S36, 1 America helmet, S2 x KBC helmets, one Aprilia helmet, RST ladies jacket, s/s gloves to match helmet, s/s open to offers on all. Tel. 07908 332951. Merseyside.



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# The Courier Career Corollary

**Steve Rose**



**M**y career as a motorcycle courier lasted a little over two weeks. Blasting between Leeds and Bradford in the cruel, cold and blustery winter of 1987. With hindsight, my choice of bike, a race-tuned Yamaha RD350LC, probably wasn't the best machine for the job, but the reality was that my inability to find the correct destination was what finished it.

Getting to within a mile or so was fine, but the rest of it was hopeless. Even now I'm the same. Given a destination in, say, Trowbridge, I can find my way to the outskirts without needing a map or instructions – all those miles in the last 30 years mean there's a grid of dots upstairs that just need joining together. But the last few miles will take ages because I don't look where I am, only where I'm going and I have no attention to, er, something or other.

Of course, these days many of us have some kind of sat nav. I've just bought one and it is brilliant. Now I can take any number of random turns in any remote, Scottish location and get as lost as I like, safe in the knowledge that all I have to do is tap 'home' into the keypad and I am no longer lost. Plus it is amazing for getting me that last mile in record time. So much so that I've already done a few laps of Central London just for fun so I can make the most of it.

Unfortunately, the rest of the journey – the first 200 miles – is the complete opposite. I discovered this last week when I had to go to, er, Trowbridge. Unaided, I would have gone cross country through Northampton, Oxford and along the M4 – it's a route I know well. Enough dual carriageway to keep the speed up, enough scenery to be interesting and the last few times I've done it, reasonably traffic-free too.

Now what I should have done was followed my nose along said route and turned to sat nav when I got there, but one of the things I like about the tech is that it tells me what time I will arrive with uncanny accuracy. So I programmed it from the off and then got taken down a route through Coventry, Warwick, Cirencester and down something called the Fosse Way. Which might have been a little shorter than my route, but on single track roads, dripping in busy roundabouts and rammed with traffic, which being winter and mostly dark made overtaking tricky.

And the ETA kept creeping up and up until finally, it took almost an hour longer than sat nav had originally predicted. And I think I know why. Now that so many people have sat nav I'm guessing that most of them just

Riding the wheels off a bike and getting paid for it. No, not MotoGP but a wild city landscape of yore coloured red with the blood of those chasing millions of pounds a week.

do the same thing and follow what it says. Including the truck drivers at the front of the half-mile long queue doing 40mph in their wake. So the Fosse Way route is gridlocked while all the other major roads in the area are deserted.

And suddenly I realised that sat nav is a very good thing indeed because the more people who have one the more traffic will end up on all the same roads, leaving the rest of the network for us to have fun on. The only stipulation is that you never turn yours on and must, instead rely on a map taped to your tank.

Imagine though how different those heady days of courier craziness in the 80s would have been if all those chemical-fuelled moon-eyed dispatchers had been following an algorithm instead of their diesel-stained, pimply noses. 1001 CX500s at every set of lights on the embankment, engines drowned out by a chorus of plummy-voiced 'now turn left and make a U-turn when safe to do so'.

In my mind those 80s heroes are the greatest of all biking's legendary tribes. Mods, rockers, greasers, you can keep 'em. No sport yet invented comes close to sitting outside the Intrepid Fox in Soho in 1989 watching a future middle-manager risking everything to deliver a letter.

Back then, dispatching felt like a legitimate way to ride the wheels off an otherwise ordinary motorcycle and get away with it, while, according to the ads in the bike press, get paid at least a million quid an hour for the pleasure. And what makes things even better is that those former couriers, now in their early fifties are getting nostalgic about the horrific old wrecks they used to ride. Have you seen the price of a CX500? Low mileage, mint and never dispatched... just like none of the £5000 RD350LCs were ever raced.

MSL's parent group bought a magazine called *Fast Bikes* last year and those who remember its launch in 1991 will recall that many of its early staffers were plucked from the ranks of a courier company owned by the man behind the magazine. For a few great years *Fast Bikes* ran riot across motorcycle publishing. In truth, it was dispatching's last hurrah.

Am I the only person who misses it?

## Who is Rose?

Steve Rose is a high mileage road rider. A former editor of *Bike* and *RiDE* magazine and one time back street bike dealer. He's also one of the UK's most experienced and trusted road testers



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